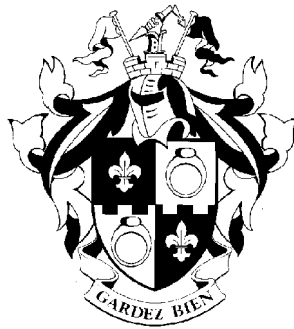


**ORGANIZATION OF RECREATION PROGRAMS
ACROSS THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION**



OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT
REPORT NUMBER 2009-7

January 13, 2009

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**ORGANIZATION OF RECREATION PROGRAMS ACROSS
THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION**
OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT REPORT 2009-7
JANUARY 13, 2009

THE ASSIGNMENT

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's (M-NCPPC) Montgomery County Department of Parks and Montgomery County's Department of Recreation provide recreation programs for the residents and visitors of Montgomery County. The County Council requested this Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) study to:

- Identify the array of recreation programs offered by the two departments;
- Determine which of the recreation programs are unique to each department, and which are similar to programs offered by the other department;
- Review how the departments currently coordinate the delivery of recreation programs to County residents; and
- Provide the basis for an informed discussion about options for the possible restructuring of recreation programs across these two departments.

PROVISION OF RECREATION PROGRAMS

This OLO study defined recreation programs as: organized recreation activities administered and provided by the Department of Parks or Department of Recreation through career staff, seasonal staff, contract instructors, or trained volunteers.

Department of Recreation. The Department of Recreation operates 32 recreation facilities across the County and provides many recreation programs in five categories: sports, summer camps and clinics, classes and activities, trips and excursions, and special events. The Department of Recreation also provides targeted programs for seniors, persons with disabilities, and teens.

Department of Parks. The Department of Parks operates and maintains 408 parks on more than 34,000 acres of parkland throughout the County. In addition to a variety of management, planning, and maintenance functions, the Department of Parks provides recreation programs in seven categories: sports, summer camps and clinics, classes and activities, trips and excursions, recreational park amenities, special events, and athletic field permitting and maintenance.

COMPARISON OF RECREATION PROGRAMS

OLO compared the array of recreation programs offered by the two departments by grouping the types of programs and identifying which are similar and which are unique. In addition to the type of program, other factors impact the "uniqueness" of an individual program, such as schedule, age range, program fees, program capacity, staffing structure, and location.

In sum, the departments offer a mix of similar and unique recreation programs. Additionally, the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation operate independent administrative structures for program registration, marketing and outreach, and program feedback.

The five categories of recreation programs that are provided by both departments are compared in greater detail on the next page.

COMPARISON OF RECREATION PROGRAMS

Sports Programs. As shown in Table 1, both the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation offer sports programs, but the specific types of sports do not overlap. Staff from both departments report that the current sports programming split has evolved over time, and the departments have worked to avoid duplicative offerings.

Summer Camps and Clinics. As shown in Table 2, both the departments offer summer camps and clinics. Of the ten types of camps/clinics offered, six types are unique and four are similar. During the 2008 summer camp season, the Department of Recreation offered 84 camps and clinics and the Department of Parks offered 69 camps and clinics.

Table 1. Sports Programs

Type	Recreation	Parks
Tennis		✓
Ice Skating		✓
Ice Hockey		✓
Soccer	✓	
Basketball	✓	
T-ball	✓	
Field Hockey	✓	
Softball	✓	
Football	✓	
Volleyball	✓	
Fencing	✓	
Martial Arts	✓	
Aquatics	✓	

Table 2. Summer Camps and Clinics

Type	Recreation	Parks
Nature/Science/Outdoors	✓	✓
Sports/Fitness	✓	✓
Art	✓	✓
Multi-Dimensional	✓	✓
Cultural/Heritage		✓
Scouting Clinics		✓
Drama	✓	
Dance/Performing Arts	✓	
Therapeutic Recreation	✓	
Other	✓	

Table 3. Classes and Activities

Type	Recreation	Parks
Arts and Crafts	✓	✓
Cooking	✓	✓
School Break Programs	✓	✓
Wellness/Exercise/Fitness	✓	✓
Nature/Science/Outdoors		✓
Homeschool Classes		✓
Dance	✓	
Martial Arts	✓	
Music	✓	
Instructional Sports Clinics	✓	
Language	✓	
Dog Obedience	✓	
Age-Specific Programming	✓	
Therapeutic Recreation	✓	
Other	✓	

Classes and Activities. As shown in Table 3, both departments offer classes and activities. Of the 15 types of classes and activities offered, 11 are unique and four are similar. During 2008, the Department of Recreation offered over 900 classes and activities and the Department of Parks offered over 750 classes and activities.

Trips and Excursions. Both departments offer similar types of trips and excursions. During 2008, the Department of Recreation offered 160 trips and excursions and the Department of Parks offered 170 trips and excursions. The primary difference is the target audience: the Department of Recreation limits its trip programming to seniors, teens, and persons with disabilities while the Department of Parks generally provides its trips and excursions for all adults.

Special Events. The departments each offer special events throughout the year that are open to the community and held at various locations and facilities. On certain occasions, the departments also jointly organize and administer special events.

FY09 FUNDING AND STAFFING FOR RECREATION PROGRAMS

DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION

The FY09 operating budget for the Department of Recreation is \$32.4 million and includes around 450 workyears. Table 4 indicates that \$24 million (74%) and 414 workyears (92%) are allocated to the Programs Division and Facilities Division for the direct provision of recreation programs. The Department anticipates receiving around \$11 million in user fee revenue in FY09, recovering 34% of the total Department expenditures and 46% of the Programs and Facilities Divisions' expenditures. The Department's budget is funded primarily through Recreation Tax revenues.

Table 4. Department of Recreation FY09 Programs and Facilities Divisions Budget Data (\$ in 000s)

Division and Program Area	Workyears		Budgeted		Cost Recovery %
	Career	Seasonal	Expenditures	Revenue	
Programs Division					
Camps Program	5.5	30.8	\$1,665	\$1,319	79%
Classes Program	7.3	0.9	\$676	\$520	77%
Sports Program	11.0	20.8	\$2,198	\$855	39%
Seniors Team	12.7	14.0	\$1,754	\$304	17%
Teen Team	24.4	35.8	\$4,716	\$546	12%
Therapeutic Recreation Team	6.7	7.7	\$1,009	\$101	10%
Facilities Division					
Aquatics	25.4	115	\$5,964	\$6,065	102%
Regions and Community Centers	42.6	53.2	\$5,897	\$1,244	21%
Total	135.4	278.2	\$23,879	\$10,954	46%

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS

As shown in Table 5, the FY09 approved operating budget for the Department of Parks includes approximately \$19 million in expenditures and 188 workyears for recreation programs. These totals represent around 20% of the Department's total approved FY09 operating budget and 22% of its workforce. The Department anticipates receiving around \$8 million in user fee revenue in FY09, recovering 42% of recreation program expenditures. The Department's budget for recreation programs is funded from both the tax-supported Parks Fund and the Enterprise Fund, a proprietary fund supported by user fees and other non-tax revenue sources.

Table 5. Department of Parks FY09 Recreation Programming Budget Data (\$ in 000s)

Programming Category	Workyears		Budgeted		Cost Recovery %
	Career	Seasonal	Expenditures	Revenue	
Camps, Classes, and Trips					
Nature Centers	20.4	3.8	\$2,057	\$203	10%
Public Gardens	2.6	3.0	\$460	\$180	39%
Enterprise Division	1.0	2.3	\$263	\$165	63%
Other Categories					
Sports Programs	16.9	34.7	\$6,370	\$5,989	94%
Recreational Amenities	6.1	13.2	\$1,303	\$931	71%
Athletic Field Permit./Maintenance	84.4		\$8,762	\$650	7%
Total	188.4		\$19,215	\$8,118	42%

PRICING AND COST RECOVERY

The Department of Recreation and Department of Parks have separate pricing and cost recovery policies and practices. In 2006, the Council adopted Executive Regulation 12-05, "Department of Recreation Fee Procedure," which established a formal user fee and cost recovery policy for the Department of Recreation. The Department of Parks does not have a universal pricing and cost recovery policy; instead policies can vary by program type and funding source.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION

Over the past 20 years, the departments have entered into several formal lease agreements and signed four memorandums of understanding (MOU). In July 2004, the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation entered into an MOU to clarify the working relationship between the departments in 10 functional agreement areas. The MOU also included coordination goals and detailed action steps for each area. To date, however, the implementation has been mixed at best as most of the action steps detailed in the 2004 MOU have not been fully implemented. **As a result, while some effort is made by both departments to coordinate activities and administrative functions, in practice, the two departments operate largely as two independent entities.**

RESTRUCTURING OPTIONS AND OLO RECOMMENDATION

OLO developed four options for possibly restructuring recreation programs, listed below. The first option proposes consolidating the management of all recreation programs under one department. The other three options maintain the existing two department structure, but provide some of the benefits that would come from consolidation.

Option A: Consolidate the management of all recreation programs under one department.

A1: Consolidate all recreation programs under management of the Montgomery County Recreation Department.

A2: Consolidate all recreation programs under management of the Montgomery County Department of Parks.

Option B: Maintain the two department structure, but assign program responsibilities between the two to eliminate overlap.

Option C: Maintain the two department structure, but consolidate recreation program registration and marketing under one department.

Option D: Maintain the two department structure, but press for implementation of the provisions negotiated in the 2004 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Office of Legislative Oversight's Recommendation for Council Action

OLO recommends that the Council endorse consolidation of all recreation programs under one department (Option A1 or A2). Recognizing the multiple staffing and program details that must be worked out with such a change, OLO also recommends the Council assign and establish the deadline for the preparation of a Transition and Implementation Plan.

**ORGANIZATION OF RECREATION PROGRAMS ACROSS THE
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION**

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Chapter I. Authority, Scope, and Organization of Report

A. Authority

Council Resolution 16-673, *FY 2009 Work Program of the Office of Legislative Oversight*, adopted July 29, 2008.

B. Purpose and Scope of Report

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's (M-NCPPC) Montgomery County Department of Parks and Montgomery County's Department of Recreation provide recreation programs and/or services for the residents and visitors of Montgomery County. These two agencies are created under separate legislative authority, directed by different governing bodies, and funded from differing taxes.

The County Council appropriates funds for the management and delivery of recreation programs in both the Department of Recreation and the Department of Parks. Consistent with the Council's funding and related oversight responsibilities, the County Council requested this Office of Legislative Oversight study to provide the basis for an informed discussion about options for the possible restructuring of recreation programs across these two departments.

Specifically, the Council asked OLO to:

- Identify the array of recreation programs offered by the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation;
- Determine which of the recreation programs are unique to each department;
- Determine which of the recreation programs are similar to programs offered by the other department; and
- Review how the departments currently work together (in both formal and informal ways) to coordinate the delivery of recreation programs to County residents.

The scope of OLO's study was limited to recreation programs in the two departments. As a result, OLO did not review or analyze any of the non-recreation program functions provided by either department.

C. Organization of Report

Chapter II, Recreation Programs in Montgomery County, defines "recreation programs" within the context of this report, and provides a brief overview of two events related to the current governance structure of recreation programs in Montgomery County.

Chapter III, Overview of the County Department of Recreation, provides an overview of Montgomery County's Department of Recreation and the recreation programs and services it provides.

Chapter IV, Overview of the M-NCPPC Department of Parks, provides an overview of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's Montgomery County Department of Parks and the recreation programs and services it provides.

Chapter V, Comparison of Recreation Programs, compares the type of programming within the five categories of recreation programs provided by both the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation; and details selected administrative functions, characteristics, and policies of the departments related to recreation programming.

Chapter VI, Interdepartmental Coordination, summarizes how the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation work together to coordinate the delivery of recreation programs.

Chapter VII, Findings, summarizes OLO findings on the organization of recreation programs across the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation.

Chapter VIII, Options and Recommendation, provides options for the possible restructuring of recreation programs across these the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation and OLO's recommendation for Council Action.

Chapter IX presents **Agency Comments** received on a final draft of this report.

D. Methodology

Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) staff members Craig Howard and Richard Romer conducted this study. OLO gathered information through document reviews, data analysis, and interviews with staff from the Montgomery County Department of Recreation and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Department of Parks.

As part of this assignment, the Council requested that OLO identify the array of recreational programs offered by the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation. OLO's definition of recreation programming for the purposes of this study is presented in Chapter II. OLO's inventory of recreation programs offered by the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation is based off of the "Montgomery County Guide: Recreation and Park Programs" (Program Guide) from winter to fall 2008; both department's summer camp guides; and from discussions with staff from the two departments. OLO based its count of programs on the unique program titles offered. If a program was offered more than once, it was only counted once.

E. Acknowledgements

OLO received a high level of cooperation from everyone involved in this study. OLO appreciates the significant time commitment, the information shared, and the insights provided by all staff who participated. Particular individuals OLO would like to acknowledge are listed below.

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From Montgomery County Government, OLO thanks: Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Kathleen Boucher; and Director Gabriel Albornoz, Jeff Bourne, David Branick, Jennifer Dover, Ginny Horvath, Rita Howard, Vicki Kane, Martha Lilley, Suzan Maher, Sherry Martin, Robin Riley, Rosalind Roberts, and Mark Winans from the Department of Recreation.

In addition, OLO would like to thank Donna Bartko, Chair, and the other members of the County-wide Recreation Advisory Board; Barbara Gaffney, formerly of the Department of Recreation; and Trish Heffelfinger of the Maryland Soccer Foundation.

Chapter II. Recreation Programs in Montgomery County

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's Montgomery County Department of Parks and Montgomery County Government's Department of Recreation provide recreation programs and/or services for the residents and visitors of Montgomery County. The Department of Parks' and Department of Recreation's delivery of recreation programs and services has evolved over time. No formal determination has been made as to which department provides which specific recreation programs and/or services. The chapter is organized as follows:

- **Part A** defines "recreation programs" within the context of this report; and
- **Part B** provides a brief overview of two events related to the current governance structure of recreation programs in Montgomery County.

A. Definition of Recreation Programs

For the purposes of this study, OLO defined recreational programs as organized recreation and/or leisure activities administered and provided by the Department of Parks or the Department of Recreation through career staff, seasonal staff, contract instructors, or trained volunteers. OLO identified seven categories of recreation programs that fall under this definition:

- 1) Sports programs;
- 2) Summer camps and clinics;
- 3) Classes and activities;
- 4) Trips and excursions;
- 5) Recreational amenities;
- 6) Special events; and
- 7) Athletic field permitting and maintenance.

The Department of Parks operates and maintains 408 parks on more than 34,000 acres of parkland, and provides a variety of management, planning, and programming functions. Chapter IV provides an overview of the Department of Parks' organization and delivery of recreation programs and services. Some of the specific functions or activities of the Department that did not fall under OLO's recreation programming classification include:

- The provision, upkeep, inspection, and maintenance of park facilities (e.g. outdoor basketball courts, playgrounds, trails, etc.) that allow for non-programmed, self-directed recreational opportunities.
- Partnerships where recreation programs on park land or in park facilities are organized and provided by other entities through a formal lease and/or operational agreement (e.g. Soccerplex, Equestrian Facilities, Golf Courses).

- Natural resource and land management functions, historic properties functions, and management of public buildings and other real estate.

The Montgomery County Department of Recreation operates 32 facilities across the County and offers many recreation programs and services. Chapter III provides an overview of the County Department of Recreation's organization and delivery of recreation programs.

The only major program or activity of the Department of Recreation that did not fall under OLO's recreation program classification was the Charles W. Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity. The Gilchrist Center offers cultural programs and services to the community, including English language classes, citizenship preparation, legal assistance, small business development, and job training.

B. Organizational History of Parks and Recreation in Montgomery County

This section summarizes two key events that relate to the current organization and coordination of recreation programs across the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation.

1. Montgomery County Recreation Act

In 1927, the Maryland General Assembly created the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) to develop and operate public park systems and provide land use planning for the physical development of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.¹ M-NCPPC is a bi-county agency comprised of the Montgomery County Planning Board and the Prince George's County Planning Board. Among the responsibilities assigned to the Montgomery County Planning Board were the provision of land use planning, operation of park systems, natural resource and land management, and administration of recreation programs for the County.

In 1951, the State of Maryland adopted legislation that authorized the transfer of the administration of recreation programs from M-NCPPC to Montgomery County Government, effective June 1953. The State legislation also authorized the transfer of all funds derived from the recreation tax, grants, and user fees to the County Government. However, M-NCPPC retained possession of all its park lands and recreation areas, as well as the responsibility to maintain these properties.²

As authorized by the State legislation, the County Council enacted the Montgomery County Recreation Act in 1951 to:

¹ Code of Maryland, Article 28, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, § 1-101.

² Chapter 671, Laws of Maryland, 1951.

...establish, develop and operate a coordinated and comprehensive public recreational program, designed to meet the needs of all age groups of the citizens from a community, educational, fraternal, athletic and social standpoint.³

The Act created a Department of Recreation, and established a Recreation Board to serve an advisory role. The Act instructed the Recreation Director to make use of public and private recreation facilities in the County and coordinate the Department's recreational programs with the programs of other organizations whenever "...such coordination will promote the best interests of the County and its citizens."⁴

2. 1993 Parks and Recreation Merger Report

In February 1992, the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee requested that the directors of the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation jointly prepare a report on the possibility of consolidating the two departments. In January 1993, the directors transmitted the final "Merger Report" to the Council and Executive. The report reviewed the potential benefits and costs of a possible merger, and identified structural barriers that would need to be addressed prior to any merger.

Benefits and Costs of Merging Departments. The Merger Report listed five "significant advantages" the directors believed the community would realize from a combined Parks and Recreation Department:

- A single identity with less confusion to the public;
- A consistent philosophy, mission, and set of priorities;
- Simplified "one-stop shopping" for classes, registrations, and permits;
- Coordinated long-term planning for programs and facilities; and
- Broadened volunteer and staff capabilities.

The report also stated that in the long term, a combined department would offer the most efficient and effective means of delivering recreation facilities and services to Montgomery County residents.

The Merger Report provided a range of estimates for both one-time costs and annual fiscal impacts associated with a merger. A 1993 Office of Legislative Oversight memorandum to the PHED Committee that reviewed and analyzed the Merger Report came to the following conclusions:⁵

- A merger of the two departments (in either direction) has both one-time and ongoing costs associated with it; and
- A merger (in either direction) is not guaranteed to realize net cost savings over time.

³ Chapter 8, 1951 Laws of Montgomery County, Maryland.

⁴ Chapter 8, 1951 Laws of Montgomery County, Maryland.

⁵ February 22, 1993 Memorandum from Karen Orlansky, Office of Legislative Oversight, to the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee. (Attached at ©1)

Barriers to Merging. The 1993 Merger Report identified several structural issues that would need to be addressed if a merger were to occur. These issues, listed below, are primarily related to personnel and retirement laws, regulations, and practices of County Government and M-NCPPC:

- County Government's Discontinued Service Retirement (DSR) benefit;
- Inconsistent work weeks between the agencies;
- Lack of salary comparability between the agencies;
- Differences in approaches to annual merit increases;
- Job retention policies;
- Unfunded pension liabilities; and
- Incompatibility of computer and communications hardware/software.

Merger Report Recommendations. The Merger Report concluded by stating that, "from a philosophical and professional point of view, a merger between the Parks and Recreation Department would ultimately provide the best level of recreational services to the citizens of Montgomery County." However, the report went on to state that "neither Director is comfortable with a recommendation that would remove their Department from its existing parent organization."⁶

Instead, as an alternative to a merger, the directors identified opportunities for cooperative efforts to enhance the service delivery of the two departments. These included:

- Improved coordination of staff functions, delivery of service and planning for classes, leagues and special events;
- Increased interagency involvement in the budget planning and preparation process;
- Joint development and distribution of community relations materials/messages; and
- Joint volunteer recruitment.

PHED Committee Recommendations. In January 1993, the PHED Committee held a worksession on the report. Based on cost estimates from the report, the Committee concluded that a merger of the Departments of Parks and Department of Recreation "does not appear practical at this point in time."⁷ The PHED Committee did recommend that the Council's Management and Fiscal Policy (MFP) Committee examine ways to make personnel and retirement systems more flexible, and recommended new approaches to review the FY94 operating budgets of the two departments.

Chapter VI summarizes the status of current coordination efforts between the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation, many of which grew out of the 1993 Merger Report.

⁶ Parks and Recreation Merger Report, January 8, 1993, pg. 10.

⁷ March 5, 1993 Memorandum from William Hanna, Chair, Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee to the County Council, pg. 1. (Attached at ©1)

Chapter III. Overview of the County Department of Recreation

This chapter provides an overview of Montgomery County's Department of Recreation and the recreation programs and services it provides. This chapter is organized as follows:

- **Part A** summarizes the Department's recreation programs and services;
- **Part B** describes the Department's organizational structure; and
- **Part C** reviews the Department's FY09 operating budget and funding sources.

The Montgomery County Department of Recreation operates 32 facilities across the County and offers many recreation programs and services annually. The Department of Recreation's mission is to provide high quality, diverse, and accessible programs, services, and facilities that enhance the quality of life for all ages, cultures, and abilities.¹

A. Recreation Programs and Services

The Department of Recreation provides five categories of recreation programs:

1. Sports;
2. Summer camps and clinics;
3. Classes and activities;
4. Trips and excursions; and
5. Special events.

The Department of Recreation offers recreation programs at community centers, aquatic centers, public schools, park buildings and fields, and private facilities.

Targeted Programming. In addition to recreation programs open to the general public, the Department of Recreation targets certain sports, summer camps, classes, trips, and special events to three specific populations: seniors, persons with disabilities, and teens.

- **Seniors** – The Department of Recreation offers recreation programs for active seniors, and special programs for frail and isolated seniors. This program also provides free and fee-based educational and health-related services and other types of screenings at senior centers.
- **Persons with Disabilities** – The Department of Recreation provides accessible recreation programs for individuals with disabilities through two means. The Department provides specialized “adaptive” programs and services for persons with disabilities, such as camps, classes, trips, and events. The “companion” program enables the inclusion of persons with disabilities in general program offerings.

¹ Montgomery County Office of Management and Budget. “Fiscal Year 2009 Operating Budget: Department of Recreation.” July 2008.

- **Teens** – The Department of Recreation provides programs and services for teens, intended, in part, to counter the risk of joining gangs. The Department schedules teen programs primarily from 3 pm to 6 pm during the school year and all day in the summer. Some teen programs also include academic assistance and social services.

1. Sports

The Department of Recreation provides sports leagues, tournaments, classes, and instructional clinics for youth and adults.

Youth Sports. This program administers and delivers programs in youth sports. It provides soccer, basketball, and T-ball for children in kindergarten through second grade, as well as leagues in field hockey, basketball, baseball, softball, flag football, and in-line hockey for children in third through twelfth grade. The Department of Recreation also operates the Olney Manor Skate Park at Olney Manor Regional Park, which provides open skate sessions for an admission fee and equipment rentals.

Adult Sports. This program provides clinics, leagues, and tournaments in soccer, basketball, softball, volleyball, fencing, in-line skating, and martial arts for adults.

Aquatics. The Department of Recreation provides aquatic recreational, instructional, competitive, therapeutic, and rehabilitative activities. Aquatics programs are available at the County's seven outdoor and four indoor pools. Table 3-1 lists the aquatic programs.

The Department of Recreation also offers recreational and lap swimming daily at each pool. Users have the option of paying admission for each entry, or purchasing a multi-swim or annual family/individual pool pass. The four indoor pools also have multi-purpose rooms available for rental by groups.

Table 3-1: Department of Recreation Aquatic Programs

Type of Program	Description
Swim Instruction	Swim lessons for all ages and abilities
Competitive Swimming and Diving	Training and competitive swimming and diving for varying levels of ability and interest
Water Fitness Classes	Water fitness and rehabilitative classes, such as water aerobics, arthritis exercise, and body sculpting
Certification and Safety Courses	Safety and certification courses, including lifeguard, pool operator, scuba, and first aid classes

Source: County Department of Recreation

Targeted Sports. The Department of Recreation provides two sports programs for middle and high school aged youth in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services, Police Department, and Montgomery County Public Schools. The Rec Extra program provides a variety of after school sports and leisure activities in all 38 middle schools in the county. The Sports Academies are teen programs at four high schools that have a tutoring component in addition to sports, such as basketball, soccer, ping-pong, and weightlifting.²

2. Summer Camps and Clinics

The Department of Recreation provides in-house and contracted summer camps for children four to 13 years of age from June to August. In the 2008 summer camp season, Recreation offered about 80 camps. Table 3-2 lists types of summer camp programs. The camp offerings include art camps, nature camps, science camps, sports skills camps, and specialized camps provided by contractors, such as dance, cheerleading, fencing, karate, and magic.

Table 3-2: Department of Recreation Camp Programs, Summer 2008

Type of Camp	Age Range	Duration	Description
Contractual Camps	Ages 3-18	10 weeks	Specialty programs taught by professional contractors in art, dance, cheerleading, fencing, karate, magic, sports, and rocketry.
Summer Camps	Ages 4-13	8-9 weeks	All-day camps, such as art, outdoor/nature, sports, and drama.
Sports Skills Programs	Ages 6-16	6 weeks	Skill development in a variety of competitive sports.
Teen Programs	Ages 13-16	6 weeks	Swimming, sports, games, trips, special events, food, music and/or amusement parks for teens.
Therapeutic Camps	Ages 5-21	6 weeks	Specialized camps available to children and youth with disabilities.

Source: County Department of Recreation

Targeted Summer Camps and Clinics. In addition to general camps, Recreation offers specialized teen and therapeutic recreation camps. Recreation also has 28 Summer Fun Centers where youth ages five to 12 years may participate on a drop-in basis. This supervised, six-week program offers a variety of activities focused around weekly themes, such as crafts, art, sports, and drama.

² Sports Academies are programmed out of Blair, Paint Branch, Springbrook, and Wheaton High Schools.

3. Classes and Activities

The Department of Recreation offers classes seasonally through contractors four times a year in arts, crafts, exercise, music, dance, and special interest areas. Special intensive classes and clinics are also offered during school vacation times. During 2008, the Department of Recreation offered over 900 classes and activities. Table 3-3 summarizes the Department's class offerings, including classes targeted to seniors, persons with disabilities, and teen-aged youth.

Table 3-3: Classes Offered Through the Department of Recreation, 2008

Type of Class	Description
Arts and Crafts	Classes taught by professional artists.
Cooking	Classes in cooking techniques and the cuisines of different regions and countries of the world.
Dance	Classes taught by professional dance instructors for youth and adults, such as jazz, ballroom, tap, and line dancing.
Exercise and Fitness	Classes for youth, teens, and adults to encourage participants to live a healthy, active lifestyle.
Instructional Sports	Classes to develop sport skills, including classes in fencing, badminton, basketball, and speed and agility training.
Martial Arts	Classes in the martial arts, including Jujitsu, Aikido, and Kendo.
Music	Classes taught by professional music instructors, in topic areas such as piano, guitar, and voice.
School Break Programs	Activities for school-aged children during holiday, winter, spring, and summer breaks from school.
Tiny Tots	Activities for pre-school children.
Wellness	Classes to improve nutrition, muscle tone, flexibility, circulation, concentration, and increase performance and relaxation; after-school activities; and community health fairs and screenings.
Xciting Xtras	Classes unique in content, including knitting, horseback riding, and dog obedience.
Baby Boomers	Classes, seminars, and programs targeted at the "Baby Boomer" generation, including retirement, etiquette, and party planning.
Seniors	Classes for seniors in a variety of areas, such as health and fitness, art, computer skills, and retirement.
Persons with Disabilities	Provides adaptive recreational skill classes for persons with disabilities, such as cooking, martial arts, and crafts.
Teens	Classes for youth, including horseback riding and etiquette.

Source: County Department of Recreation

4. Trips and Excursions

The Department of Recreation offers all trips and excursions to three targeted groups: active seniors, persons with disabilities, and middle and high school aged youth.

- **Seniors** – Recreation provides two types of trips for active adults over 55: short day excursions and the “Senior Outdoor Adventures in Recreation” (SOAR) program. Day excursions are four to six hour trips that visit local museums, cultural attractions, and sporting events. The SOAR program includes longer trips, such as kayaking, canoeing, site seeing, tours, and hiking.
- **Persons with Disabilities** – Recreation provides trips for persons with disabilities through Active Adults and Weekenders programs.
- **Teens** – Recreation offers trips for middle and high school aged teens through Teen Clubs on holidays and weekends to the various locations, such as the beach, a ropes course, amusement parks, and white water rafting.

5. Special Events

The Department of Recreation programs County-sponsored special events at aquatics facilities and community centers, such as pool parties and competitive tournaments. The Department also offers third party support for County and community events, including festivals, community days, and flea markets.

Targeted Special Events. The Department of Recreation also targets special events to two populations:

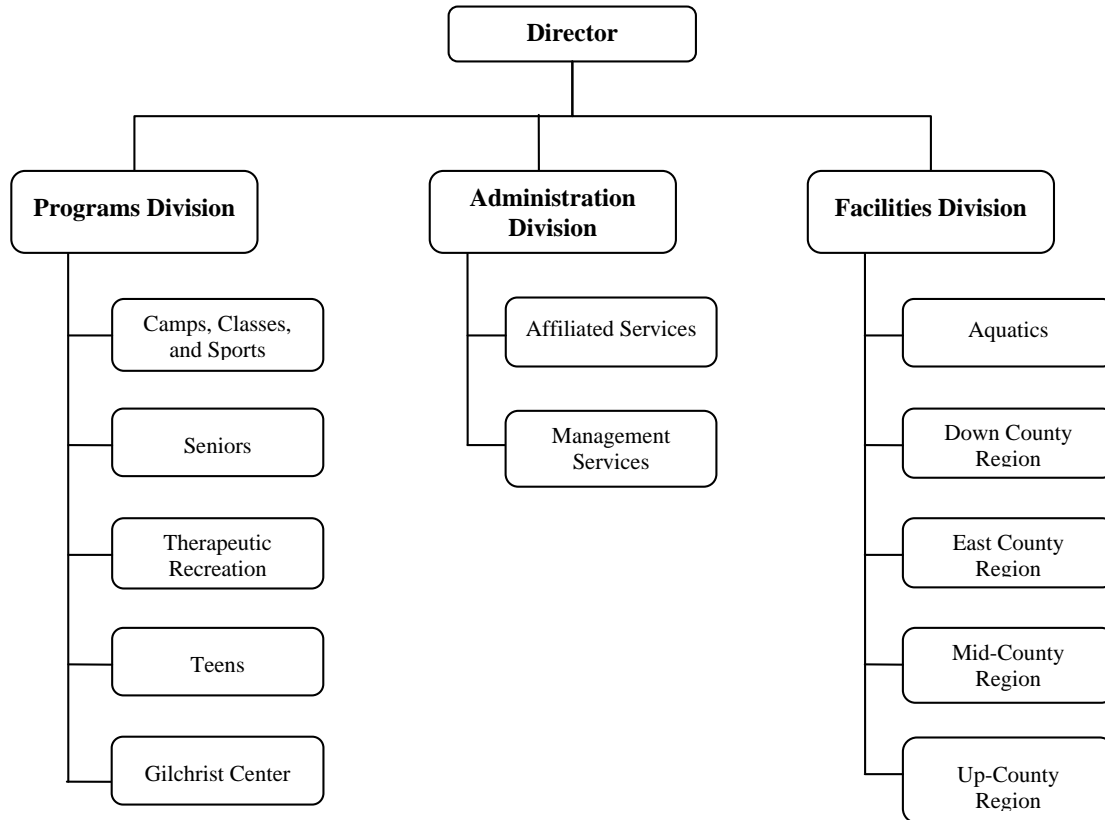
- **Persons with Disabilities.** The Departments provides dances and special events for persons with disabilities, such as the Blue Crab Boogie and Backyard BBQ.
- **Teens.** The Department provides special events for middle and high school aged youth, including Battle of the Bands, Tobacco Free Sports Challenge, dances, activity nights, and parties under the “Drawing the Line” and “Under 21” programs.

A list of the special events offered by the Department of Recreation from winter to fall 2008 is located in the appendix at ©85.

B. Organizational Structure

Exhibit 3-1 displays the organization of the Department of Recreation. The Department is comprised of the Office of the Director and three divisions: Administration, Programs, and Facilities.

Exhibit 3-1: Department of Recreation Organization Chart



1. Administration Division

Management Services Team. The Management Services Team provides administrative support functions, such as personnel, program registration, contract management, and customer service, as well as the operating budget, capital improvements plan (CIP) process, and facility maintenance. Staff also provide management, policy development, and supervisory oversight.

Affiliated Services Team. The Affiliated Services Team is responsible for coordinating all County-sponsored special events, and assists with community-sponsored events. The Team oversees arts grants, and provides all information technology functions for the department, including maintenance of the Department's website. Affiliated Services also handles the production of the quarterly "Montgomery County Guide: Recreation and Park Programs" (Program Guide) and other marketing programs.

2. Programs Division

The Programs Division consists of the Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity, which provides cultural and social services, and four “teams” that provide recreational programs and services. Table 3-4 provides descriptions of the functions of the four Programs Division teams.

Table 3-4: Department of Recreation’s Programs Division Teams

Team	Function
Camps, Classes and Sports	The Camps, Classes, and Sports Team includes summer camps, seasonal classes, and sports leagues and instructional clinics.
Seniors	The Seniors Team offers recreation, educational, and health-related programs and services for adults age 55 and over, as well as special programs for frail and isolated seniors. In addition to neighborhood senior programs, the County’s five senior centers are focal points for the delivery of recreation, community, and health-related services to senior adults: Damascus, Gaithersburg Upcounty, Holiday Park, Long Branch, and Margaret Schweinhaut. ³
Therapeutic Recreation	The Therapeutic Recreation Team provides accessible recreation programs for individuals with disabilities of all interests and skill levels, including adaptive classes, camps, and events. The “companion” program focuses on inclusion in general classes for individuals with disabilities using auxiliary aids and services.
Teens	The Teen Team provides a wide variety of recreation programs year round for middle and high school youth, including camps, trips, and events. The Teen Team also coordinates teen programs that have an emphasis on positive youth development and gang prevention.

Source: County Department of Recreation

Gilchrist Center. Charles W. Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity offers cultural programs and services to the community. Programs include English language classes, citizenship preparation, legal assistance, small business development, and job training. The Gilchrist Center is the only major program or activity of the Department of Recreation that did not fall under OLO’s recreation programming classification.

³ The Long Branch Senior Center is located in the Long Branch Community Center. The Gaithersburg Upcounty Senior Center is sponsored by the City of Gaithersburg with support from Montgomery County Department of Recreation.

3. Facilities Division

The Facilities Division is responsible for the day-to day management, maintenance, and operation of the Department's facilities. Table 3-5 lists the 18 community centers (including the Gilchrist Center) and 11 aquatic facilities operated by the Department of Recreation. The Department's community centers and aquatic facilities host recreation programs contracted out by the Department, and run programs and special events themselves, including some senior and therapeutic recreation programs.

Table 3-5: Facilities Operated by the Department of Recreation

Facility Type	Facility Name
Community Centers	Clara Barton Community Center Bauer Drive Community Center Ross J. Boddy Community Center Gwendolyn Coffield Community Center Damascus Community Center East County Community Center Germantown Community Center Charles W. Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity Good Hope Community Center Leland Community Center Long Branch Community Center Longwood Community Center Plum Gar Community Center Potomac Community Center Marilyn J. Praisner Community Recreation Center Scotland Community Center Upper County Community Center Wheaton Community Center
Aquatic Facilities	Bethesda Outdoor Pool Germantown Indoor Swim Center Germantown Outdoor Pool Good Hope Sprayground Long Branch Outdoor Pool Martin Luther King Swim Center Montgomery Aquatic Swim Center Olney Swim Center Upper County Outdoor Pool Western County Outdoor Pool Wheaton/Glenmont Outdoor Pool

Source: County Department of Recreation

The Department of Recreation offers recreation programs at several types of facilities and locations not operated by the Department, including:

- Montgomery County Public Schools' elementary and secondary schools;
- Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission parks and buildings;
- County libraries; and

- Other facilities, such as the American Film Institute (AFI) Silver Theatre and Cultural Center, Camp Olympia, Create Arts Center, Funfit, Inc., Golden School of Music, Inwood House, Kritt Studio, and Studio 310.

The Department of Recreation either pays rental fees or has an agreement with the ownership of the facility to offer programs at these locations. Chapter VI includes more detail on the ownership of recreational facilities and land.

Recreation Regions and Community Centers. There are currently four recreation regions in the County: Down County; East County; Mid-County; and Up-County. The purpose of these recreation regions is to administer recreation programs more efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of residents.⁴ Community Centers host Department of Recreation programs, as well as programs for other agencies and community organizations. These programs include the Club Rec after school program and Club Friday for elementary school youth. Community Centers provide classes, activities, and events for children, teens, adults, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. Most recreation centers also have exercise and game rooms open to the public.

Aquatics. The Aquatics program operates seven regional outdoor pools and the Good Hope neighborhood spray park, which operate seasonally, as well as four year-round indoor aquatic facilities. Aquatics offers recreational, instructional, competitive, and therapeutic water activities, as well as daily lap swimming at each pool.

4. Recreation Advisory Boards

According to the County Code, the Recreation Advisory Boards advise the Department of Recreation, County Executive, and County Council on recreation and park policies, services, and needs. The recreation advisory boards are comprised of the County-wide Recreation Advisory Board and four regional advisory boards:

- Down County Regional Recreation Advisory Board;
- Eastern County Regional Recreation Advisory Board;
- Mid-County Regional Recreation Advisory Board; and
- Up-County Regional Recreation Advisory Board.

The Recreation Advisory Boards also assist in “developing and maintaining cooperative relationships” with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Board of Education, and voluntary groups that impact recreation programs and services.⁵

The Boards meet monthly, review information from the agencies, and make recommendations on matters concerning budgets, recreation programs, services, and facilities. The Department of Recreation and the Department of Parks supply ex-officio senior staff members to the County-wide Recreation Advisory Board, and the Departments’ regional staff support the work of the four regional advisory boards.

⁴ Montgomery County Code. Recreation and Recreation Facilities. § 41-20.

⁵ Montgomery County Code. Recreation and Recreation Facilities. § 41-22.

C. Department of Recreation FY09 Operating Budget

This section provides an overview of the County Department of Recreation's FY09 operating budget and funding sources.

1. Operating Budget

The FY09 operating budget for the Department of Recreation is \$32.4 million. The total budget consists of \$21.6 million (67%) in personnel costs and \$10.9 million (33%) in operating costs.⁶ Table 3-6 shows the FY09 operating budget for the Department of Recreation's major program areas. The two largest divisions in terms of FY09 operating costs are the Programs Division (37%) and the Facilities Division (36%).

Table 3-6: FY09 Approved Department of Recreation Expenditures by Program Area (\$ in 1,000s)

Program	Expenditures			% Total
	Operating	Personnel	Total	
Office of the Director				7%
Administration/Policy Management	\$1,169	\$1,153	\$2,323	7%
Administration Division				10%
Affiliated Services Team	\$1,080	\$1,008	\$2,088	6%
Management Services Team	\$207	\$919	\$1,126	4%
Programs Division				37%
Teen Team	\$1,695	\$3,021	\$4,716	15%
Camps, Classes and Sports Team	\$1,084	\$3,455	\$4,538	14%
<i>Camps Program</i>	\$516	\$1,149	\$1,665	--
<i>Classes Program</i>	\$19	\$657	\$676	--
<i>Sports Program</i>	\$549	\$1,648	\$2,198	--
Seniors Team	\$334	\$1,420	\$1,754	5%
Therapeutic Recreation Team	\$240	\$769	\$1,009	3%
Facilities Division				36%
Aquatics	\$1,303	\$4,661	\$5,964	18%
Recreation Regions and Community Centers	\$743	\$5,153	\$5,897	18%
Other				9%
Recreation Fixed Costs	\$2,997	\$1	\$2,998	9%
Total	\$10,852	\$21,561	\$32,413	100%

Source: Office of Management and Budget and Department of Recreation

Note: Total costs and percentages may differ than the summation of program costs and percentages due to rounding. Administrative costs are divided evenly between the programs of which they are shared (Camps Program and Classes Program, and Seniors Team and Therapeutic Recreation Team).

⁶ Actual expenditures in FY09 may be lower than the approved budget, as the Department of Recreation is participating in the FY09 Savings Plan for Montgomery County.

Positions and Workyears. The FY09 operating budget for the Department of Recreation includes about 450 workyears. Table 3-7 shows the FY09 workyears for the Department's major program areas. In FY09, the Facilities Division (53%) and the Programs Division (39%) have the largest percent of workyears. The Department's approximately 284 seasonal staff workyears comprise about 63% of the Department's total workyears.

Table 3-7: FY09 Approved Department of Recreation Workyears

Program	Workyears			% Total Workyears
	Career	Seasonal	Total	
Office of the Director	8.0	2.4	10.4	2%
Administration/Policy Management	8.0	2.4	10.4	2%
Administration Division	22.3	4.3	26.6	6%
Affiliated Recreation Services Team	10.9	3.0	13.9	3%
Management Services	11.5	1.3	12.8	3%
Programs Division	67.5	110.0	176.5	39%
Camps, Classes and Sports Team	23.8	52.5	76.3	17%
<i>Camps Program</i>	<i>5.5</i>	<i>30.8</i>	<i>36.3</i>	--
<i>Classes Program</i>	<i>7.3</i>	<i>0.9</i>	<i>8.2</i>	--
<i>Sports Program</i>	<i>11.0</i>	<i>20.8</i>	<i>31.8</i>	--
Teen Team	24.4	35.8	60.2	13%
Seniors Team	12.7	14.0	26.6	6%
Therapeutic Recreation Team	6.7	7.7	14.3	3%
Facilities Division	67.9	168.2	236.1	52%
Aquatics	25.4	115.0	140.4	31%
Recreation Regions and Community Centers	42.6	53.2	95.8	21%
Total	165.5	284.2	449.7	100%

Source: Office of Management and Budget and Department of Recreation

Note: Total workyears and percentages may differ than the summation of program workyears and percentages due to rounding. Administrative workyears are divided evenly between the programs of which they are shared.

2. Funding Sources

The Department of Recreation's budget is funded primarily through the Recreation Tax District, and user fees and charges. The Department also manages the entirely revenue-supported Recreation Activities Agency Fund, a pass-through account for the receipt of revenue from contracted programs and activities and the payments to Recreation's program contractors. The FY09 budget for the Fund is approximately \$8.2 million.

Recreation Special Tax District. The Recreation Special Tax District is a special revenue fund for revenues legally restricted to expenditures within the County-wide "Recreation District" special taxing area. The Recreation Tax District includes the County boundaries except for the City of Rockville, City of Gaithersburg, and Town of Washington Grove.⁷ The FY09 Recreation District real property tax rate is 2.2 cents per \$100 of assessed property, and budgeted at \$32.0 million.

⁷ Montgomery County Code § 41-5.

User Fees and Charges. The Department of Recreation sets user fees and charges recreation programs and services. In FY09, the Department anticipates receiving \$10.9 million in revenue from user fees and charges.

Table 3-8: Department of Recreation FY09 Budgeted Revenue

Program	Budgeted Revenue
Aquatics	\$6,065,130
Camps Program	\$1,318,670
Recreation Regions and Community Centers	\$1,244,540
Sports Program	\$854,865
Teen Team	\$546,000
Classes Program	\$520,000
Seniors Team	\$303,500
Therapeutic Recreation Team	\$101,275
Total	\$10,953,980

Source: County Department of Recreation

In 2006, the Council adopted Executive Regulation 12-05, “Department of Recreation Fee Procedure,” which established a formal user fee and cost recovery policy.⁸ According to the Fee Procedure, the Department of Recreation sets user fees and charges based on five pricing categories:

- **Community Based Programs and Services** – Programs and/or services open to all residents on an equal basis, and provides a direct or indirect benefit to the entire community. These include recreation center programs such as after school enrichment programs, Club Friday, Open Gym, and center-based classes; Summer Fun Centers; therapeutic recreation programs and classes; teen programs; youth sports; senior programs, classes, and events; and the Gilchrist Center.
- **Council/Executive Initiatives** – Programs and/or services that have been assigned by the County Council or the County Executive.
- **Partnerships** – Programs and/or services jointly sponsored by the Department of Recreation and one or more entities through a contract or Memorandum of Understanding. This includes rentals, events, and programs where the Department shares event staff or operating costs, such as the Evergreen Senior Program, Community Day celebrations, and Affiliated Services special events.
- **Specialized Programs and Services** – Programs and/or services whose primary benefits accrue directly to an individual or group. This includes aquatics, adult classes, adult sports leagues, and summer camps and clinics.
- **Rentals** – Exclusive use of a facility or space for non-partnership programs, including parties, receptions, and other private events.

⁸ The Council adopted the Executive Regulation through Resolution 15-1286 in January 2006.

Recreation obtains input on pricing levels from a sampling of program participants and facility users, as well as the County-Wide Recreation Advisory Board.⁹ Table 3-9 shows Recreation's pricing policy for the department's five pricing categories. User fees are the primary source of revenue for specialized programs and rentals, while community based programs are reduced in price and subsidized by taxes and other funding sources.

Table 3-9: Department of Recreation Pricing Policy by Cost Recovery Category

Price Recovery Category	Minimum Operating Cost Recovery ¹⁰	Minimum Staff Cost Recovery ¹¹	Minimum Support Staff Cost Recovery ¹²
Community Based Programs and Services	50%	25%	none
Council/Executive Initiatives	0-50%	0-50%	0-50%
Partnerships	50%	50%	50%
Specialized Programs and Services	100%	100%	50%
Rentals	100%	100%	100%

Source: Recreation Department Policy/Procedure: Pricing Policy. 2004.

Table 3-10 shows that in FY08 the Department of Recreation recovered 53% of the costs of providing these recreation programs. Recreation recovered 24% of the costs of providing subsidized community-based programs (\$2.9 million). Recreation recovered 93% of the costs of specialized programs and services (\$8.1 million) that directly benefit a single individual or group.

Table 3-10: FY08 Actual Cost Recovery of Recreation Program Areas (\$ in 1,000s)

Program	Expenditures	Revenue	Cost Recovery %
Community-Based Programs and Services	\$12,004	\$2,855	24%
Youth Sports ¹³	\$1,062	\$626	59%
Community Centers	\$4,340	\$1,521	35%
Seniors and Therapeutic Recreation	\$2,408	\$330	14%
Teens	\$4,195	\$378	9%
Specialized Programs and Services	\$8,699	\$8,128	93%
Aquatics	\$5,698	\$5,806	102%
Camps, Classes and Adult Sports	\$3,002	\$2,322	77%
Total	\$20,704	\$10,983	53%

Source: County Department of Recreation

⁹ Code of Montgomery County Regulations. §41.10.01 "Department of Recreation Fee Procedure." 2006.

¹⁰ Operating costs are the expenditures to provide a program or service.

¹¹ Staff costs are the salaries and fringe benefit expenses associated with all staff or contractors directly responsible for the planning and provision of programs or services.

¹² Support staff costs are the unit costs associated with the centralized operation of a program, service, or facility, but are generally not part of a user's direct experience.

¹³ The Youth Sports category includes expenditures and revenues from Youth Sports and the skate park.

Chapter IV. Overview of the Department of Parks

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) is a bi-county agency, created in State law, comprised of the Montgomery County Planning Board and the Prince George's County Planning Board. The Montgomery County Planning Board oversees the work of the Montgomery County Department of Planning and Department of Parks. This chapter provides an overview of the recreation programming provided by the Department of Parks, and is organized as follows:

- **Part A** describes the recreational programs of the Department of Parks;
- **Part B** reviews the organizational and service delivery structure of the Department;
- **Part C** summarizes the Department's FY09 budget and staffing information; and
- **Part D** details FY09 budget and staffing information for the Department's recreation programming.

A. Recreation Programs of the Parks Department

As noted in Chapter II, this study defines recreation programs as organized recreation and/or leisure activities administered and provided by the Department of Parks or Department of Recreation through career staff, seasonal staff, contract instructors, or trained volunteers. Since the Department of Parks provides recreation programs along with many other functions, this section identifies and describes the array of recreation programming it offers.

OLO identified the following categories of recreation programs offered by the Department of Parks that fall under this definition:

- 1) Sports programs;
- 2) Summer camps and clinics;
- 3) Classes and activities;
- 4) Trips and excursions;
- 5) Recreational park amenities operated and staffed by the Department;
- 6) Special events; and
- 7) Athletic field permitting and maintenance.

The remainder of this section describes these categories of recreation programs in greater detail. However, as noted earlier, the Department provides many functions other than recreation programs. Some of the specific functions or activities of the Department that did not fall under OLO's recreation program classification include:

- The provision, upkeep, inspection, and maintenance of park facilities (e.g., outdoor basketball courts, playgrounds, trails, etc.) that allow for non-programmed, self-directed recreational opportunities.

- Partnerships where recreation programming on park land or in park facilities is organized and provided by other entities through a formal lease and/or operational agreement (e.g., Soccerplex, Equestrian Facilities, Golf Courses).
- Natural resource and land management functions, historic properties functions, and management of public buildings and other real estate.

1. Sports Programs

In FY09, the Department of Parks provides sports programs in three areas: tennis, ice skating, and ice hockey. The Department also owns four golf courses and four equestrian facilities, but does not administer and provide the programming at these facilities. In 2006, the Department turned over the operations and management of the golf courses to the Montgomery County Revenue Authority, while each of the equestrian facilities is operated by a private or non-profit contractor through a formal lease agreement.

Tennis. The Department provides year-round indoor tennis programs at the Cabin John and Wheaton indoor tennis facilities and seasonal outdoor tennis programming at Cabin John, Fairland, Olney Manor, Wheaton, and South Germantown Recreational Parks. Tennis classes and lessons cover all skill levels for ages five to adult. In addition, Parks offers tennis summer camps for youth ages 7-12 at the Cabin John indoor facility. The indoor tennis facilities also offer court reservations, private lessons, and party and league play rentals. The outdoor courts are available for league play rentals and permitted events.

Ice Skating/Hockey. The Department of Parks provides year-round ice skating and ice hockey programs at the Cabin John and Wheaton Ice Arenas. Ice skating and hockey classes and lessons cover all skill levels for ages three to adult. The Department of Parks also offers summer camps and clinics for ice skating and ice hockey at both ice arenas. The ice arenas additionally offer scheduled times for public skating sessions, freestyle skating and ice dancing sessions, “stick-n-puck” hockey sessions, theme skate nights, and private lessons with pre-approved, contract instructors. Both the Cabin John and Wheaton arenas rent ice time to various youth and adult hockey leagues and programs, and the Cabin John Ice Arena has also hosted local and regional figure skating events and competitions.

2. Summer Camps and Clinics

The Department of Parks provides summer camps and clinics organized through the Department’s nature centers, public gardens, and enterprise facilities.¹

¹ Enterprise facilities are park facilities that are operated and managed by the Department’s Enterprise Division. Further information on the Enterprise Division begins on page 28.

Nature Center Camps. The Department offers summer camp and clinics through all four of its nature centers: Black Hill Visitor Center, Brookside Nature Center, Locust Grove Nature Center, and Meadowside Nature Center. These programs target youth ages 2-17; include a variety of one-day, multi-day, and weeklong programs; and include partial- and full-day programs. The summer camps programmed by the nature centers are primarily science, nature, and outdoors camps, but also include cultural and heritage camps and scouting (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Webelos, and Brownies) clinics.

Public Gardens Camps. The Department offers a limited number of summer camps and clinics (four in 2008) through Brookside Gardens. These programs are aimed at youth ages 5-10; include multi-day and weeklong programs; and are all partial-day programs. The camps offered at Brookside Gardens include art camps, a gardening camp, and a butterfly-themed camp using Brookside Garden's "Wings of Fancy" butterfly exhibit.

Enterprise Facility Camps. The Department offers another series of summer camps through its enterprise facilities, organized separately from the nature center and public gardens camps. The programs are aimed at youth ages 6-15, and are all weeklong, full-day (at least five hours) camps. In 2008, the Division's summer camp offerings included nature and outdoors camps, cultural/heritage camps, and a multi-dimensional (i.e. multiple types of activities) camp.

3. Classes and Activities

The Department of Parks provides classes and activities located and organized through the Department's nature centers, public gardens, and enterprise facilities. The classes and activities are offered for registration quarterly, coinciding with each "season" (winter, spring, summer, and fall). The summer classes and activities are separate from the summer camps and clinics described above.

Nature Center Classes/Activities. The Department offers seasonal classes and activities through all four of its nature centers: Black Hill Visitor Center, Brookside Nature Center, Locust Grove Nature Center, and Meadowside Nature Center. This programming includes offerings for both youth and adults. The length of the program varies from one-day programs lasting a couple hours to classes that meet once a week for several weeks. The classes and activities at the nature centers primarily consist of nature, science, or outdoors related programs; and also include some arts and crafts programs.

Public Gardens Classes/Activities. The Department offers seasonal classes and activities through Brookside Gardens. These programs include both youth and adult programs, and vary in length from one day programs to classes that meet once a week for several weeks. The classes and activities at Brookside Gardens is a mixture of horticultural, arts and crafts, cooking, and health and wellness programs.

Enterprise Facility Classes/Activities. The Department offers seasonal classes and activities through various enterprise facilities. The types of classes and activities offered vary in topic and focus. According to Parks staff, these programs are intended in part to increase awareness and use of the enterprise facilities by County residents and can change from year to year. Target audiences for the programs also vary, including programs aimed at youth, at parents and children together, and at adults. Some of the enterprise facility seasonal classes and activities offered during 2008 included:

- Parent and Child Princess Gala;
- Scrapbooking;
- Parent and Child Holiday Baking;
- Women's Outdoor Weekend;
- Park Play Days for Children on days when the public schools are not open; and
- Mother-Daughter Getaway Camping Trip

4. Trips and Excursions Programming

The Department of Parks provides trips and excursions organized through the Department's nature centers, public gardens, and enterprise facilities.

Nature Center and Public Gardens Trips. As with the camps and classes described above, the Department of Parks offers trips and excursions through Black Hill Visitor Center, Brookside Nature Center, Locust Grove Nature Center, Meadowside Nature Center, and Brookside Gardens. The trips are generally for adults ages 18 and over, last anywhere from between four and 12 hours, and occur on both weekdays and weekends. The types of trips and excursions offered through these facilities include kayaking, historic sites, museums, nature trips, and trips to various other regional attractions.

Enterprise Division Trips. The Enterprise Division began offering trips and excursions in fall 2008. The trips are all on weekdays lasting between five and eight hours, and all but one were limited to adults 18 years and up. The types of trips and excursions offered by the Division include river boat cruises, museum and historic site trips, and trips to regional theatre productions.

5. Recreational Park Amenities Operated and Staffed by the Department

The Department of Parks provides many recreational amenities throughout the park system. Specific recreational amenities operated and/or staffed by the Department are described in further detail below.

Boat Rentals. The Department offers boat rentals at Little Seneca Lake in Black Hills Regional Park and at Lake Needwood in Rock Creek Regional Park. Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, both locations offer rental of rowboats, canoes, and kayaks on Wednesdays through Sundays (Lake Needwood also rents pedal boats). Rentals are also available on weekends during the months of September and May.

In some instances, the Department uses the boat facilities as a component of its camps or classes/activities. The Department reports that the boat facilities are also used by the Department of Recreation and other public and private organizations as part of their recreation programs.

Trains and Carousel. The Department offers a miniature train amenity in Cabin John Regional Park; and both a miniature train and carousel amenities at Wheaton Regional Park. The Cabin John train is open for rides daily from June through August, and on weekends in April, May, September, and October. The Wheaton train and carousel is open for rides daily from May through August, and on weekends in April, September, and October.

These amenities also include specialized programming components at certain times of the year. For example, in October both locations provide Halloween-themed rides. Cabin John provides a “Eye Spy Halloween Train” aimed at children up to eight years old, and Wheaton provides a “Haunted Train and Creepy Carousel” aimed at children eight years and older.

Germantown Splash Park and Mini-Golf. The Department operates a miniature golf and splash park facility at the South Germantown Recreational Park. The miniature golf component consists of two 18-hole courses, open daily during the summer and varying hours during April, May, and September. The splash park includes a facility with a waterfall, rain tree, water tunnel, and water maze. The Splash Park is open daily from mid-June through the end of August, and on certain weekends in May and June. The Department reports that this facility is also used by the Department of Recreation and other public and private organizations as part of their recreation programs.

Little Bennett Campground. The Department operates the Little Bennett Campground within Little Bennett Regional Park. In addition to offering campsite rentals, Little Bennett Campground includes a Camper Ready Camping program (where the campground offers campsite rentals pre-set with a tent and other equipment), a camp store, and an activity center that offers scheduled programs such as nature crafts, guided trail hikes, and ice cream socials for campers. The campground also hosts certain summer camps and seasonal classes and activities.

6. Special Events

The Department of Parks programs several recreational events throughout the year that do not require pre-registration and are often free of charge. These events are held at various park facilities and are organized and administered by a variety of different staff and volunteers. Some examples of events organized and administered by the Department include:

- Underground Railroad Experience hikes and lectures;
- Josiah Henson site (“Uncle Tom’s Cabin”) tours and lectures;
- Monarch Fiesta Day at Black Hills Nature Center;
- Christmas on the Farm, the Harvest Festival, and Arbor Day events at the Agricultural History Farm Park; and
- Brookside Gardens’ Garden of Lights show and Wings of Fancy butterfly show.

The Department of Parks also jointly organizes and administers recreation and community events throughout the year with the Department of Recreation and/or other public agencies. Examples of these joint events include the Senior Olympics, Germantown fireworks, and various other walks, parades, and fairs.

7. Athletic Field Permitting and Maintenance

The Department of Parks administers the permitting and maintenance of 192 baseball and softball fields and 104 rectangular sports fields that are used for organized youth and adult sports programs run by other organizations, as well as spontaneous play and pick-up games.

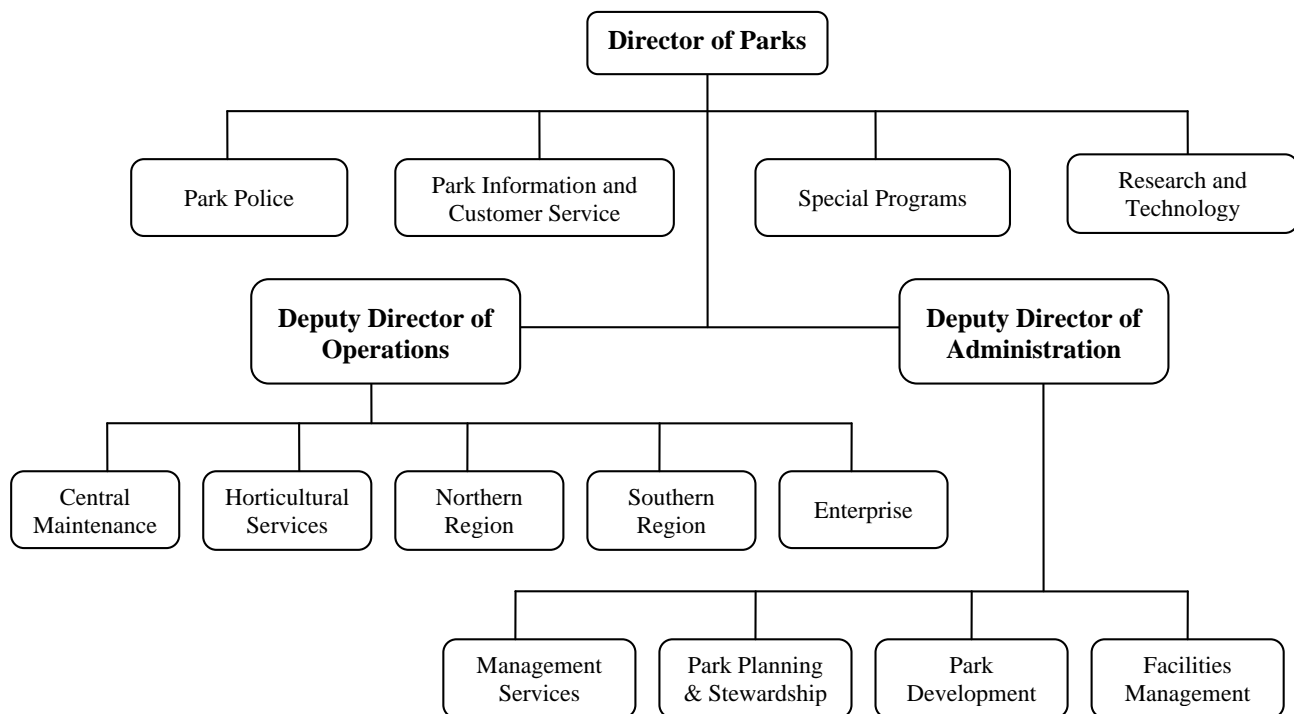
While these functions do not include the direct provision of recreation programs by the Department of Parks, they are integral to the provision of outdoor recreation programs by the other organizations. The Department’s athletic fields are permitted for league play annually by the Department of Recreation and many non-profit or private groups for youth and adult sports including soccer, softball, baseball, and football.

The maintenance activities for athletic fields include mowing; seeding; fertilizing; aeration; replacing topsoil; other repairs or renovation; installing and maintaining backstops, goals, or other field features; lining the fields; providing for adequate drainage; and addressing vandalism. The Department of Parks also recently implemented a new Athletic Field Inspection and Evaluation (AFIE) program intended to help the department measure its level of success in managing the quality of the athletic fields.

B. Organization and Service Delivery Structure

The Department of Parks currently delivers services through 13 different divisions and/or teams, as shown in the organization chart below. The management of the Department includes the Director of Parks and two Deputy Directors.

Exhibit 4-1: Department of Parks Organization Chart



This section highlights the different divisions and teams in the Department that provide the recreation programs described in Part A, provides an overview of the number and type of facilities located within the Montgomery County park system, and reviews the Department of Parks' public-private partnerships and agency-to-agency agreements.

1. Department of Parks Divisions and Teams

While many of the Department's divisions and/or teams perform multiple functions, those with organizational responsibility for the recreation programs described in Part A are discussed in more detail below.

Office of the Director. The Office of the Director is responsible for the general management and administration of the Montgomery County park system. Specific responsibilities include: implementing the Department's approved work program; advising the Planning Board on matters of park policy; acting as a liaison with local, state, and federal agencies and officials; and developing and administering internal management policies and practices. As such, the Office of the Director provides general oversight and management for all the recreational programming of the Department.

Park Information and Customer Service Team. The Park Information and Customer Service Team's responsibilities include: permitting the use of park fields and buildings by outside user groups; marketing and public awareness efforts; developing park maps, other written materials, and signage; coordinating special events held in parks; customer service and program evaluation for park programs; and leading coordination efforts with the County's Recreation Department.

Horticultural Services Division. The Horticultural Services Division provides management and operational services in horticulture, arboriculture, landscaping, nursery production, and stormwater management. The management and operation of Brookside Gardens falls under this Division, including the summer camp, classes and activities, and trips/excursions programs offered through Brookside.

Northern Region Division. The Northern Region Division provides management and maintenance services to parks and facilities encompassing the portion of Montgomery County north of Rockville. The two primary functional areas within the Division are: 1) management and maintenance services within six regional areas; and 2) services and programs at Black Hill and Meadowside Nature Centers. The summer camp, classes and activities, and trips/excursions programs offered out of Black Hill and Meadowside fall under this Division.

Southern Region Division. The Southern Region Division provides management and maintenance services to parks and facilities encompassing the portion of Montgomery County south of Rockville. The two primary functional areas within the Division are: 1) management and maintenance services within four regional areas; and 2) services and programs at Locust Grove and Brookside Nature Centers. The summer camp, classes and activities, and trips/excursions programs offered out of Locust Grove and Brookside fall under this Division.

Enterprise Division. The Enterprise Division is responsible for fee-based recreation programs, business-like enterprises, and the Department's ParkPass program registration system. The Division's six operation and program areas are: 1) administration; 2) ice rinks; 3) tennis facilities; 4) event centers; 5) park facilities; and 6) golf courses. The types of recreation programs that fall under the Enterprise Division includes sports, summer camps, classes and activities, trips/excursions, and recreational amenities.

2. Facilities Overview

The Department of Parks provides, maintains, and/or operates several types of facilities within its 408 parks. Many of these facilities are used for the provision of recreation programs by the Department. Others are not programmed, but allow for self-directed recreation and leisure opportunities.

Parks facilities are also used by other public, private, and/or non-profit groups that provide recreation programs on park property. As of 2009, the total number and types of Department of Parks' facilities are listed in Table 4-1 below.

Table 4-1: Department of Parks' Facilities

Facility Type	Number	Facility Type	Number
• Tennis Courts	305	• Nature Centers	4
• Athletic Fields	298	• Lakes	4
• Playgrounds	290	• Event Centers	3
• Basketball Courts	208	• Ice Rinks	3
• Historic Resources	157	• Campgrounds	3
• Open Picnic Areas	114	• Boating Facilities	2
• Permitted Picnic Shelters	77	• Formal Gardens	2
• Football/Soccer Fields	63	• Indoor Tennis Centers	2
• Park Activity Buildings	31	• Miniature Trains	2
• Exercise Courses	13	• Gymnasiums	1
• Equestrian Centers	6	• Carousel	1
• Golf Course	4		

Source: M-NCPPC Department of Parks

3. Public-Private Partnerships and Agency-to-Agency Agreements

Public-private partnerships and agency-to-agency agreements are service delivery mechanisms that can affect the provision of recreation programs.

Public-Private Partnerships. A public-private partnership is a cooperative agreement between the Planning Board and a private entity to deliver a service or facility to the public on M-NCPPC property. In September 2007, the Planning Board adopted a formal "Policy for Public/Private Partnerships" that governs the process for establishing these partnerships (attached at ©55). The purpose statement describe partnerships as follows:

We have entered an era of growing demand for additional programs, enhanced parks and recreational facilities, and limited resources in competition with the growing demand for other publicly funded projects. Public Private Partnerships, when properly applied, will work to the mutual advantage of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, users of services generally offered by the Commission, the taxpayers, and private companies seeking new business opportunities or a means in which to contribute to its community.²

The Department has a Public-Private Partnership Committee that meets monthly to review and evaluate both solicited and unsolicited partnership proposals and monitor the progress of existing partners. The Committee reviews information provided by the private entity and develops a staff report for the Planning Board to adopt, modify, or reject a proposal.

² Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. "New Adopted Policy for Public/Private Partnerships." September 19, 2007.

The Public-Private Partnership Committee also provides an annual progress report on each existing partner to the Planning Board.³ Some examples of existing public-private partnerships include:

- The Maryland SoccerPlex and Discovery Sports Center in South Germantown Recreational Park, operated by the Maryland Soccer Foundation;
- The Department's five equestrian centers – Callithea Farm Park, Meadowbrook Riding Stables, Potomac Horse Center, Rickman Farm Horse Park, and Wheaton Riding Stables – each operated by a different private partner;
- The golf driving range in South Germantown Recreational Park, operated by J. Doser Enterprises;
- Red Wiggler Community Farm in Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park, operated by the Red Wiggler Foundation;
- Shirley Povich Baseball Stadium in Cabin John Regional Park, which has partnerships with both the Bethesda Big Train and Georgetown University Baseball teams; and
- Adopt-a-field agreements for preferred use of various local parks and fields with the Bethesda Chevy Chase Baseball league, the Burtonsville Athletic Association, and Spencerville Academy, among others.

Agency-to-Agency Agreements. The Department of Parks also has several agreements with other governmental agencies to operate and/or maintain Parks-owned property or facilities. Some of the agreements that relate to recreation programs include:

- Four golf courses leased to the Montgomery County Revenue Authority for operation and management; and
- The Olney Manor Skate Park leased to the Montgomery County Department of Recreation for operation and management.

C. FY09 Department Budget and Staffing Summary

The Montgomery County Department of Parks approved FY09 budget totals nearly \$94 million, and includes about 850 total workyears for full-time, part-time, and seasonal staff.⁴ This total in FY09 includes approximately \$62 million (66%) in personnel costs, \$26 million (28%) in operating costs, and \$5.5 million (6%) in debt service costs.⁵

Funding Sources. Primary funding for the Department of Parks comes from two sources: the Park Fund and the Enterprise Fund.

³ Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. "Semi-Annual Report." October 2007.

⁴ Actual expenditures in FY09 may be lower than the approved budget, as the Department of Parks is participating in the FY09 Savings Plan for Montgomery County.

⁵ M-NCPPC, *Adopted Annual Budget, Fiscal Year 2009*.

- **Park Fund** – the Park Fund is a tax-supported fund that supports park maintenance, development and security operations, management of natural resources, and provision of active and passive recreational opportunities. Under State law, Montgomery County is required to levy a tax on both real property and personal property to support operations paid from this Fund. In FY09, the County Council approved an associated real property tax rate of \$0.053 per \$100 of assessed value and a personal property tax rate of \$0.047 per \$100 of assessed value for the Park Fund.
- **Enterprise Fund** – the Enterprise Fund is a proprietary fund supported by user fees and other non-tax revenue sources to cover the operational and capital expenditures for specified activities and facilities.⁶ All the expenditures and revenues for the programs and operations of the Department's Enterprise Division are accounted for in the Enterprise Fund.

In FY09, 89% (\$83.5 million) of the Department's budget is funded through the Park Fund and 11% (\$10.4 million) is funded through the Enterprise Fund. Similarly, 88% (743) of the workyears are funded through the Park Fund and 12% (105) are funded through the Enterprise Fund.

Program Budget Summary. In FY08, the Department first prepared a program-based budget. The program budget assigns various operations, maintenance, programming, and management/administration costs to specific programs and services provided by the Department across organizational units. The total budget amount and workyears in the program budget differs slightly from the organization budget because: 1) it includes estimated time spent on program elements by M-NCPPC's bi-County Central Administrative Services staff; and 2) it excludes costs that cannot be easily allocated in a program budget (e.g. debt service, charge backs, and anticipated lapse).

The program budget is not a funding allocation system, as the Department's budget and financial reporting system allocates and accounts for spending by organizational unit. The Department develops the program budget by having each organizational unit allocate the estimated or actual amount of staff time (in workyears) it spends on a program element. Personnel costs are then calculated by multiplying the total number of assigned workyears by the average salary and benefits costs for a Parks Department employee (\$82,173 in FY09). The operating costs for each program element are based on a combination of actual cost data and estimates by the organizational units.

The Department's FY09 program budget includes three programs – Administration of Parks, Park Services, and Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Resources – each of which are broken down further into one or more sub-programs and multiple program elements. Table 4-2 shows these programs, and the proportion of the Department's FY09 Program Budget they comprise. The bolded program elements are those that include expenditures for the Department's recreation programs as described in Part A.

⁶ The FY09 approved budget for the Enterprise Fund includes a \$619,000 subsidy from the Park Fund.

Table 4-2: FY09 Department of Parks Program Budget and Workyears*

Sub-Programs	Program Elements	Budget (in millions)	% of Total	WY's	% of Total
Administration of Parks					
Administration of Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management and Administration • Park Planning • Third-Party Support • Partnerships • Property Management 	\$21.3	23%	89.4	11%
Subtotal		\$21.3	23%	89.4	11%
Park Services					
Meeting and Gathering Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained Open Space • Park Activity Buildings • Event Centers • Playgrounds • Picnic Shelters • Group Picnic Areas • Dog Parks 	\$21.2	23%	210.7	27%
Organized Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseball and Softball • Field Sports • Tennis • Multi-use Courts • Adventure Sports 	\$11.8	13%	109.3	14%
Regional Attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice Skating • Camping • Mini-Golf, Splash Playground • Trains and Carousels • Boating • Golf • Equestrian Centers 	\$9.0	10%	93.4	12%
Trails and Parkways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paved Trails • Scenic Parkway Experiences 	\$6.1	7%	61.1	8%
Subtotal		\$48.1	53%	474.5	61%
Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Resources					
Land and Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horticulture • Arboriculture • Natural Resource Management • Trails • Streams • Arch./Historic Management • Agricultural Support 	\$14.9	16%	148.9	19%
Education and Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature Centers • Public Gardens • Arch./Historic Interpretation 	\$7.4	8%	72.2	9%
Subtotal		\$22.3	24%	221.1	28%
TOTAL (excluding debt service payments)		\$91.7	100%	785.0	100%

*Bolded program elements are those that include expenditures for recreation programming.

Source: FY09 M-NCPPC Department of Parks Program Budget, August 2008

D. FY09 Budget and Staffing for Recreation Programs

This section provides available FY09 budget and staffing data for the Department of Parks recreation programs identified in Part A.⁷ For the program categories, budget information is available from two sources:

- **The Department's line-item budget for each organizational unit.** For many of the recreation program areas, this includes the dedicated personnel and operating costs associated with staffing and running a program or facility.
- **The Department's program budget.** The program budget includes allocations of workyears to various recreational programs that would otherwise not show up in an organizational unit's line-item budget. OLO used these allocations to estimate the personnel costs associated with overall management/administration of each recreation programming area.

Part A of this chapter identified seven categories of recreation programs. Three of the categories – summer camps, classes/activities, and trips/excursion – do not have personnel and operating cost data that can be readily separated out from broader budget areas. As a result, the budget information for these three program categories are presented by the facility or division that provides them: Nature Centers, Public Gardens, and Enterprise Division. The budget data for the sports, recreational amenities, and athletic field permitting and maintenance are listed by programming category.

1. Sports Programs

The FY09 budget for sports programs, funded through the Enterprise Fund, includes approximately \$6.4 million in expenditures and \$6.0 million in revenue. The sports expenditures include facility debt service costs; the FY09 budgeted expenditures excluding debt service payments is approximately \$5.4 million.

Budgeted Costs. The FY09 budget for tennis, ice skating, and ice hockey sports programs totals approximately \$6.4 million, and funds 17 career and 35 seasonal workyears. This total includes:

- The line-item personnel and operating costs for the Cabin John and Wheaton indoor tennis facilities, the Cabin John and Wheaton ice arenas, and the Wheaton outdoor ice rink from the Enterprise Division;
- The debt service costs for the Cabin John and Wheaton ice arenas; and
- Additional estimated management costs allocated from the Enterprise Division and Office of the Director.⁸

⁷ Special events programming is organized and administered by a variety of different staff and volunteers. Available budget information did not readily distinguish costs for special events from other activities.

⁸ Throughout this section, all estimated personnel costs are calculated by multiplying the allocated workyears by the average salary and benefits cost for a Parks employee in FY09 (\$82,173).

Table 4-3: FY09 Approved Staffing and Expenditures for Sports Programs

Sports Programming	Workyears		Expenditures		
	Career	Seasonal	Personnel	Operating	Total
Tennis Facilities	3.0	8.5	\$416,100	\$517,800	\$933,900
Tennis Management*	1.2	0.2	\$98,608	--	\$98,608
Subtotal Tennis	4.2	8.7	\$514,708	\$517,800	\$1,032,508
Ice Rinks	11.0	26.0	\$1,399,900	\$2,873,500	\$4,273,400
Ice Rinks Debt Service	--	--	--	\$924,100	\$924,100
Ice Rink Management*	1.7	0.2	\$139,694	--	\$139,694
Subtotal Ice Rinks	12.7	26.2	\$1,539,594	\$3,797,600	\$5,337,194
Total	16.9	34.7	\$2,054,302	\$4,315,400	\$6,369,702

Source: M-NCPPC Department of Parks

*A breakdown of the allocated management workyears is included in the appendix (©69).

Budgeted Revenue. The sports programs, aside from the additional management costs allocated from the Office of the Director, are funded out of the Enterprise Fund. In FY09, the Department of Parks anticipates that sports programs will produce approximately \$6 million in revenue from user fees and charges.

Table 4-4: FY09 Budgeted Revenue for Sports Programs

Sports Programming	Budgeted Revenue
Tennis Facilities	\$1,602,400
Ice Rinks	\$4,386,300
Total	\$5,988,700

Source: M-NCPPC Department of Parks

2. Nature Center Programs

Nature center programs include summer camps, classes and activities, and trips/excursions organized and administered by the Department's four nature centers. The FY09 budget for nature center-based recreation programs includes around \$2.1 million in expenditures and \$203,000 in revenue.

Budgeted Costs. The FY09 budget for nature center programs totals approximately \$2.1 million, and funds 20 career and 0.2 seasonal workyears. This total includes:

- The line-item personnel and operating costs for the Black Hill Visitor Center and Meadowside Nature Center from the Northern Region;
- The line-item personnel and operating costs for the Brookside and Locust Grove Nature Centers from the Southern Region; and
- Additional estimated management costs allocated from the Enterprise Division and Office of the Director.

Table 4-5: FY09 Approved Staffing and Expenditures for Nature Center Programs

Nature Center Programming	Workyears		Expenditures		
	Career	Seasonal	Personnel	Operating	Total
Brookside Nature Center	6.5	1.0	\$540,000	\$71,000	\$611,000
Locust Grove Nature Center	3.5	1.0	\$394,000	\$27,500	\$421,500
Meadowside Nature Center	5.0	1.4	\$402,500	\$61,800	\$464,300
Black Hill Visitors Center	4.3	0.2	\$416,200	\$37,200	\$453,400
Nature Center Management*	1.1	0.2	\$106,825	--	\$106,825
Total	20.4	3.8	\$1,859,525	\$197,500	\$2,057,025

Source: M-NCPPC Department of Parks

* A breakdown of the allocated management workyears is included in the appendix (©69).

Budgeted Revenue. The Nature Center programs are funded out of the Park Fund, and as a result do not have a specific cost recovery requirement. In FY09, the Department of Parks anticipates that nature center programs will produce approximately \$203,000 in revenue from user fees and charges.

Table 4-6: FY09 Budgeted Revenue for Nature Center Programs

Nature Center Programming	Budgeted Revenue
Brookside Nature Center	\$83,400
Locust Grove Nature Center	\$24,500
Meadowside Nature Center	\$70,000
Black Hill Visitors Center	\$25,000
Total	\$202,900

Source: M-NCPPC Department of Parks

3. Public Gardens Programs

The public gardens programs, which all occur at Brookside Gardens, include summer camps, classes and activities, and trips/excursions. The FY09 budget for Brookside Gardens recreation programs includes approximately \$460,000 in expenditures and \$180,000 in revenue. Brookside Gardens recreation programs are funded in part out of the Park Fund and in part out of the Enterprise Fund.

Budgeted Costs. The FY09 budget for Brookside Gardens recreation programs totals approximately \$460,000, and funds 2.6 career and 3.0 seasonal workyears. This total includes:

- Estimated personnel costs for two career workyears responsible for Brookside Gardens recreation programming funded from the Horticulture Division;
- Estimated personnel costs for 2.9 season workyears funded from the Enterprise Division; and
- Additional estimated management costs allocated from the Enterprise Division and Office of the Director.

Available budget information did not distinguish operating costs for recreation programs from the operating costs for other activities at Brookside Gardens.

Table 4-7: FY09 Approved Staffing and Expenditures for Brookside Gardens Programs

Brookside Gardens Programming	Workyears		Expenditures		
	Career	Seasonal	Personnel	Operating	Total
Brookside Gardens	2.0	2.9	\$402,647	--	\$402,647
Brookside Gardens Management*	0.6	0.1	\$57,521	--	\$57,521
Total	2.6	3.0	\$460,168	--	\$460,168

Source: M-NCPPC Department of Parks

* A breakdown of the allocated management workyears is included in the appendix (©69).

Budgeted Revenue. The Brookside Gardens revenues are budgeted in the Enterprise Fund. In FY09, the Department of Parks projects that the camps, classes, and trips programming through Brookside Gardens will produce approximately \$180,000 in revenue from user fees and charges.

4. Enterprise Division Programs

The Enterprise Division, Camps and Programs Unit provides summer camp, classes and activities, and trips/excursions programs. The FY09 budget for Enterprise Division recreation programs includes approximately \$263,000 in expenditures and \$165,000 in revenue.

Budgeted Costs. The Enterprise Division's Camps and Programs Unit has one career staff position (1.0 workyears) that coordinates the camps, classes, and trips offerings and 2.3 workyears of seasonal staff.

Table 4-8: FY09 Approved Staffing and Expenditures for Enterprise Division Camps, Classes, and Trips Programs

Enterprise Programming	Workyears		Expenditures		
	Career	Seasonal	Personnel	Operating	Total
Camps and Programs Unit	1.0	2.3	\$158,500	\$104,200	\$262,700

Source: M-NCPPC Department of Parks

Budgeted Revenue. The Enterprise Division Camps and Programs Unit is funded out of the Enterprise Fund. In FY09, the Department of Parks anticipates that the Camps and Programs Unit will produce approximately \$165,200 in revenue from user fees and charges.

5. Recreational Park Amenities Operated and Staffed by the Department

The recreational park amenities operated and staffed by the Department include boat rentals, miniature trains, a carousel, a campground, miniature golf courses, and a splash playground. The FY09 budget for these recreational amenities includes approximately \$1.3 million in expenditures and \$931,000 in revenue.

Budgeted Costs. The FY09 budget for recreational park amenities totals approximately \$1.3 million, and funds 6.1 career and 13.2 seasonal workyears. This total includes:

- The line-item personnel and operating costs for the Lake Needwood and Black Hills boat rental facilities; Cabin John and Wheaton trains and carousel; Little Bennett Campgrounds; and South Germantown Regional Park Mini-Golf and Splash Playground from the Enterprise Division; and
- Additional estimated management costs allocated from the Enterprise Division and Office of the Director.

Table 4-9: FY09 Approved Staffing and Expenditures for Recreational Park Amenities

Recreational Amenities	Workyears		Personnel	Operating	Total
	Career	Seasonal			
Boat Rentals	--	3.8	\$88,500	\$96,600	\$185,100
Boat Rental Management*	1.6	--	\$146,869	--	\$146,869
Subtotal	1.6	3.8	\$235,369	\$96,600	\$331,969
Trains/Carousel	--	4.0	\$82,300	\$140,200	\$222,500
Trains/Carousel Management*	1.5	--	\$132,238	--	\$132,238
Subtotal	1.5	4.0	\$214,538	\$140,200	\$354,738
Little Bennett Campgrounds	1.0	2.2	\$143,200	\$78,200	\$221,400
Campgrounds Management*	1.0	0.2	\$101,173	--	\$101,173
Subtotal	2.0	2.4	\$244,373	\$78,200	\$322,573
Mini-Golf/Splash Playground	0.5	2.9	\$60,700	\$174,700	\$235,400
Mini-Golf/Splash Management*	0.5	0.1	\$58,804	--	\$58,804
Subtotal	1.0	3.0	\$119,504	\$174,700	\$294,204
Total	6.1	13.2	\$813,784	\$489,700	\$1,303,484

Source: M-NCPPC Department of Parks

* A breakdown of the allocated management workyears is included in the appendix (©69).

Budgeted Revenue. The recreational park amenities, aside from the additional management costs allocated from the Office of the Director, are funded out of the Enterprise Fund. In FY09, the Department of Parks anticipates that the recreational amenities will produce approximately \$931,300 in revenue from user fees and charges.

Table 4-10: FY09 Budgeted Revenue for Recreational Amenities

Recreational Amenities	Budgeted Revenue
Boat Rentals	\$168,500
Trains/Carousel	\$378,200
Little Bennett Campgrounds	\$158,700
Mini-Golf/Splash Playground	\$225,900
Total	\$931,300

Source: M-NCPPC Department of Parks

6. Athletic Field Permitting and Maintenance

The FY09 budget for athletic field permitting and maintenance includes approximately \$8.8 million in expenditures and \$650,000 in revenue.

Budgeted Costs. The FY09 budget for athletic field permitting and maintenance totals approximately \$8.8 million, and funds around 84 workyears. This total includes:

- The estimated personnel and operating costs for the Department's baseball and softball program element; and
- The estimated personnel and operating costs for the Department's field sports program element.

The costs for these program elements include all maintenance and equipment costs, permitting costs, utility costs for lighted fields, and cost of Park Police patrols.

Table 4-11: FY09 Approved Staffing and Expenditures for Athletic Field Permitting and Maintenance

Program Element	Workyears	Expenditures		
		Personnel	Operating	Total
Baseball and Softball	45.4	\$3,730,667	\$1,067,574	\$4,798,241
Field Sports	39.0	\$3,204,758	\$759,101	\$3,963,859
Total	84.4	\$6,935,425	\$1,826,675	\$8,762,100

Source: M-NCPPC Department of Parks

Budgeted Revenue. Athletic field permitting and maintenance is funded out of the Park Fund and does not have a specific cost recovery requirement. The FY09 budgeted revenue from the permitted use of athletic fields totals \$650,000, including \$100,000 in anticipated revenue generated from an increase in field permitting fees described below.

In October 2008, the Planning Board approved a change to an hourly athletic field fee schedule, effective for the Spring/Summer 2009 season. The Department anticipates that the new fee structure could increase revenue by more than 30% overall.⁹ According to the Parks Department, the purpose of changing the fee structure was to:

- Help offset the continually increasing costs of utilities, field maintenance and renovation for the Department's heavily used fields;
- Generate additional funds to improve the quality and playability of the fields;
- Discourage over-permitting and non-use of fields by large organizations;
- Provide more opportunities for new groups to gain weekend and other field time; and
- Bring the athletic fields more in line with other regional jurisdictions.¹⁰

In coordination with the Department of Parks, the Interagency Coordinating Board for Community-Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) also adopted the same fee structure changes for the athletic fields CUPF permits so that fees will remain consistent county-wide.

⁹ "Proposal for Implementation of Hourly Athletic Fees." Memorandum from Kate Stookey to Montgomery County Planning Board. September 15, 2008.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Chapter V. Comparison of Recreation Programs

In Chapters III and IV, OLO identified the array of recreation programs provided by the Department of Parks and the Department of Recreation. Within that array, OLO identified five categories under which both Departments provide programs. This chapter reviews the programs in those categories and describes selected administrative functions and structures of the departments related to recreation programs. The chapter is organized as follows:

- **Part A** compares the type of programs within the five categories of recreation programming provided by both the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation; and
- **Part B** details selected administrative functions and policies of the departments related to recreation programs.

A. Comparison of Recreation Program Types

This comparison section focuses on the similar and unique types of sports, summer camps and clinics, classes and activities, trips and excursions, and special events offered by each department. In addition to the type of program, several other factors can impact the “uniqueness” of an individual program offered by the Department of Parks or Department of Recreation. These factors can include:

- **Age Range** – This factor varies both by whether programs are targeted to specific age populations (i.e., youth or adults) and specific ages ranges within a population (e.g., youth ages 6-12, teens ages 13-17, seniors ages 55+, etc.).
- **Duration** – This factor varies by length of time a program lasts (e.g., partial-day, full-day, etc.) as well as the number of days the program lasts (e.g., one-day, multiple days, one-week, two-week, etc.).
- **Program Capacity** – Some programs can only accommodate a small number of participants while other programs can accommodate a large number.
- **Program Fees** – Fees for the programs range from free programs to programs that cost \$300. Fees are often linked to program revenue requirements.
- **Location** – This factor can vary by where programs are offered geographically, and the types of facilities programs are offered (e.g., department-owned facilities, facilities owned by another governmental agency, private facilities, etc.).
- **Staffing Structure** – The various methods of staffing programs include using career staff, seasonal staff, contract instructors, and/or volunteers.

A listing of a sample of the programs summarized in this section, including details on many of the factors described above, is included in the appendix (©70).

1. Sports Programs

While both departments provide sports programs, they do not overlap in the types of programs provided. The Department of Parks' sports programs are driven by the tennis and ice arena facilities that it owns and operates. As a result, the Department of Parks limits its sports programs to tennis (indoor and outdoor), ice skating, and ice hockey. The Department of Recreation offers sports programs in ten different sports. Table 5-1 shows the types of sports programs offered by each department in 2008.

Table 5-1: Type of Sports Programs Offered by the Department of Recreation and Department of Parks, 2008

Type of Sports Programming	Recreation	Parks
Tennis		✓
Ice Skating		✓
Ice Hockey		✓
Soccer	✓	
Basketball	✓	
T-ball	✓	
Field Hockey	✓	
Softball	✓	
Football	✓	
Volleyball	✓	
Fencing	✓	
Martial Arts	✓	
Aquatics	✓	

Sources: 2008 Seasonal Program and Summer Camp Guides

Both departments offer classes, lessons, and instructional clinics within their respective sports offerings. The Department of Recreation additionally runs several youth and adult sports leagues.

Staff from both departments report that the current sports programming split has evolved over time. While no formal determinations have been made as to which sports should be offered by each department, the departments have worked to avoid duplicating sports programs. For example, within the past few years the Department of Recreation stopped offering tennis programs so as not to conflict with the tennis programs provided by Parks. However, one area of similar sports programming is that both the Department of Recreation and the Department of Parks (organized through the Park Police) administer *Punt, Pass, and Kick* football clinics.

2. Summer Camps and Clinics

Both departments offer summer camp and clinic programs, primarily for school-aged youth. The Department of Parks offers summer camp and clinics at its four nature centers, at Brookside Gardens, and at some of its Enterprise Division facilities. The Department of Recreation offers summer camps at a variety of locations and facilities across the County.

During the 2008 summer camp season, the Department of Recreation offered 84 camps and clinics and the Department of Parks offered 69 camps and clinics.¹ The different types of summer camp programs offered by the departments are listed in the table below.

Table 5-2: Types of Summer Camp Programs Offered by the Department of Recreation and Department of Parks, 2008

Summer Camp Programming	Recreation	Parks
Nature/Science/ Outdoors	✓	✓
Sports/ Fitness	✓	✓
Art	✓	✓
Multi-Dimensional	✓	✓
Cultural/Heritage		✓
Scouting Clinics		✓
Drama	✓	
Dance/Performing Arts	✓	
Therapeutic Recreations	✓	
Other	✓	

Sources: 2008 Seasonal Program and Summer Camp Guides

In addition to the type of the camp, the summer camps and clinics offered by the departments vary by a number of other factors, including duration; age group; location; and staffing structure. In general, Department of Parks summer camps are staffed by a combination of career staff (either providing the programming or managing the programs) and seasonal staff. A small number, those provided at Brookside Gardens, are staffed by contract instructors. Department of Recreation summer camps and clinics are provided by a combination of career staff, seasonal staff, and contract instructors.

The four types of summer camp programs that are offered by both departments are described in more detail below.

Nature/Science/Outdoors Camps. In 2008, the Department of Parks offered 32 nature/science/outdoors camps and the Department of Recreation offered six. The Department of Parks camp themes varied across a wide range of topics, including: camping, fishing, geology, insects and animals, wildlife ecology, meteorology, resource conservation, and nature exploration. The Department of Parks nature/science/outdoors

¹ Before and after camp extended care programs are not included in the totals.

camps were offered from June through August, were generally four to five days in length, and included both partial and full-day camps.

The Department of Recreation's nature/science/outdoors camps were offered at both park locations and at public schools. The camp themes included nature exploration, space and rocketry, and science experiments. These camps were offered from June through August, and were primarily full-day camps lasting one or two weeks.

Sports/Fitness Camps. In 2008, the Department of Recreation offered 33 sports/fitness camps and the Department of Parks offered 11 sports/fitness camps. While both departments provided sports/fitness camps, the specific camps offered by each mirrored the division of general sports programming between the departments. The Department of Parks offered camps for tennis, ice skating, and ice hockey; while the Department of Recreation offered camps for many different sports including aquatics, basketball, fencing, cheerleading, horseback riding, karate, football, skateboarding, boxing, volleyball, baseball, field hockey, and soccer.

Art Camps. In 2008, the Department of Recreation offered 13 art camps and the Department of Parks offered two art camps. Recreation art camps were primarily offered at community centers and public schools, except for one offered at a local park. Many of the Recreation art camps covered a variety of art mediums, skills, and techniques such as drawing, painting, and sculpture. These camps were generally two-week, full or half-day camps. Other half-day camps focused on art projects based on specific themes such as anime, castles and dragons, and pirates, and lasted one week.

The two Department of Parks summer camps were offered through Brookside Gardens. Both of the camps – Budding Artists I and Budding Artists II – covered a variety of art techniques including drawing, painting, and collages. Both of these were one-week, partial-day camps.

Multi-Dimensional Camps. Multi-dimensional camps are those that incorporate several types of programming, such as art, sports, nature, trips, etc., into a single camp experience. In 2008, the Department of Recreation offered nine multi-dimensional camps and the Department of Parks offered two.

The Department of Recreation's multi-dimensional camps include three programs aimed at teens: teen drop-in centers, a summer teen travel camp, and a camp focusing on leadership and career development skills. It also includes the Department's Summer Fun Centers, a drop-in program offered at multiple locations throughout the County for children ages 5-13. The camps were offered out of public schools and community center locations.

The Department of Parks offered two "Week in the Park" multi-dimensional camps through the Wheaton ice rink: one half-day program and one full day program. The Week in the Park program involves a variety of programs including indoor tennis, ice skating, scavenger hunts, arts and crafts, bubble making, and nature walks.

3. Classes and Activities

Both departments offer classes and activities covering a large variety of topics for all ages. The Department of Recreation offers classes and activities at a variety of locations and facilities across the County. The Department of Parks offers classes and activities at its four nature centers, Brookside Gardens, and at some of its Enterprise Division facilities. Both departments break up their programs into winter, spring, summer, and fall seasons.

During 2008, the Department of Recreation offered over 900 classes and activities and the Department of Parks offered over 750 classes and activities.² The different types of classes and activities offered by the departments are listed in the table below.

Table 5-3: Types of Classes and Activities Offered by the Department of Recreation and Department of Parks, 2008

Types of Classes and Activities	Recreation	Parks
Arts and Crafts	✓	✓
Cooking	✓	✓
School Break Programs	✓	✓
Wellness/Exercise and Fitness	✓	✓
Nature/Science/Outdoors		✓
Homeschool Classes		✓
Dance	✓	
Martial Arts	✓	
Music	✓	
Language	✓	
Instructional Sports Clinics	✓	
Dog Obedience	✓	
Teens and Seniors Programs	✓	
Therapeutic Recreation ³	✓	
Other	✓	

Sources: 2008 Seasonal Program and Summer Camp Guides

In addition to the content of a class, classes and activities also vary by a number of factors, including duration; age group; location; and staffing structure. Nearly all of the Department of Recreation's classes and activities are offered through contract instructors. The Department of Parks uses a combination of career staff, seasonal staff, and contract instructors to staff its classes and activities.

The four types of classes and activities that are offered by both departments are described in more detail below.

² These totals include the approximate number of classes offered by program title. Many classes have multiple sessions a user can sign up for.

³ One of the Department of Parks public-private partners, Great and Small, provides therapeutic horseback riding at M-NCPPC's Rickman Farm Horse Park.

Arts and Crafts Classes. In 2008, the Department of Parks offered around 80 art and craft classes and the Department of Recreation offered 115. Most of the Department of Parks classes, located out of the nature centers and Brookside Gardens, fell into two content areas: seasonal or holiday crafts and nature or outdoors-themed arts and crafts. The Department also offered a limited number (four in 2008) of drawing and painting and photography classes at Brookside Gardens. The Department of Recreation arts and crafts classes cover a wider array of content, including: general crafts, drawing and painting, pottery, jewelry-making, cartooning, and photography.

The Department of Parks art classes tended to be single-session classes lasting between 1-3 hours, while Department of Recreation art classes include both single-session classes and multiple session classes held over the course of multiple weeks. Both departments provided classes aimed at children and classes aimed at adults.

Cooking Classes. In 2008, the Department of Recreation offered over 90 different cooking classes and the Department of Parks about 20 cooking programs. Recreation offers its cooking classes out of community centers and public school locations. Recreation offers a wide variety of cooking programs each season, including: kids and family cooking, wine selection and wine-making, seasonal and holiday dishes, and specialty food (e.g., vegetarian, health, soups, barbequing, etc.) classes. Recreation also offered cooking clinics as part of its age-specific programs for teens and seniors, and through its therapeutic recreation programs.

The Department of Parks offers a few cooking classes each season, usually lasting a single session and incorporating an outdoors theme. Parks cooking class topics have included vegetarian cooking, braising, and cooking with fruits; and are offered out of Brookside Gardens and the nature centers.

School Break Programs. School break programs are those held for school-aged children on weekdays when public schools are not in session. In 2008, the Department of Recreation offered six school break programs. Programs topics included fitness, dance, karate, sports, games, and arts and crafts. The Department's school break programs are generally offered out of community centers, are offered for youth ages 3-12, include both partial- and full-day classes, and include both one-day classes and weeklong classes when schools are on winter or spring break.

Beginning in the fall 2008 season, the Department of Parks offered a "Park Play Day" school break program at both the Wheaton and Cabin John ice rinks. The content of the program includes tennis lessons, ice skating lessons, and arts and crafts. This Department of Parks school break program is offered as full-day classes on specific days schools are not in session; it is not offered as a week-long program.

Wellness/Exercise and Fitness Classes. In 2008, the Department of Recreation offered over 90 wellness, exercise, and fitness classes, while the Department of Parks offered a few classes in two areas. Both of the types provided by the Department of Parks – yoga and tai chi – are also provided by the Department of Recreation. This section summarizes both department's yoga and tai chi classes.

In 2008, the Department of Recreation offered 22 different types of yoga classes and seven types of tai chi classes. The Recreation classes are held at community centers and are primarily offered for ages 16 and up. Recreation's yoga and tai chi classes included:

- Yoga Basics
- Gentle Yoga
- Hatha Yoga
- Vini Yoga
- Pre-Natal Yoga
- Yoga I and II
- Tai Chi, Beginning
- Tai Chi, Continuing
- Tai Chi, I and II
- Tai Chi Chuan I, II, and III

The Department of Parks offered six different types of yoga classes and one type of tai chi class in 2008. The Parks classes are all held at Brookside Gardens for adults ages 18 and up. Parks yoga and tai chi classes included:

- Introduction to Yoga
- Gentle Yoga
- Para Yoga
- Yoga in the Garden
- Tai Chi in the Garden

4. Trips and Excursions

Both departments offer trips and excursions throughout the year. During 2008, the Department of Recreation offered around 160 trips and excursions and the Department of Parks offered around 170 trips and excursions. The different types of trips and excursions offered by the departments are listed in the table below.

Table 5-4: Types of Trips and Excursions Offered by the Department of Recreation and Department of Parks, 2008

Types of Trips and Excursions	Recreation	Parks
Kayaking and Canoeing	✓	✓
Hiking/Nature	✓	✓
Museums, Cultural and Historic Sites	✓	✓
Regional Attractions	✓	✓

Sources: 2008 Seasonal Program and Summer Camp Guides

As indicated in the table, both departments offer similar types of trips and excursions. The primary difference is the target audience: the Department of Recreation limits its trip programming to seniors, teens, and persons with disabilities while the Department of Parks generally provides its trips and excursions for all adults.

The Department of Recreation offers trips through its Seniors Team, Teen Team, and Therapeutic Recreation Team. The trips vary in length, including both partial- and full-day trips, and occur on both weekdays and weekends. The trips for seniors include both a short day trip program and the “Senior Outdoor Adventures in Recreation” program.

The Department of Parks offers day-trips and excursions through its four nature centers, Brookside Gardens, and the Enterprise Division. The trips are generally for adults ages 18 and over, last between four and 12 hours, and occur on both weekdays and weekends.

5. Special Events

The Department of Parks and Department of Recreation offer special events throughout the year that are open to the community. A list of the special events offered by the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation from winter to fall 2008 is located in the appendix at ©85.

Department of Parks. The Department of Parks offers several recreational events throughout the year that do not require pre-registration and are often free of charge. These events are held at various park facilities and are organized and administered by a variety of different staff and volunteers. Examples include:

- Underground Railroad Experience hikes and lectures;
- Josiah Henson site (“Uncle Tom’s Cabin”) tours and lectures;
- Monarch Fiesta Day at Black Hills Nature Center;
- Christmas on the Farm at the Agricultural History Farm Park; and
- Harvest Festival.

Department of Recreation. The Department of Recreation also offers special events throughout the year that do not require pre-registration and are often free-of-charge. These events are often held at the Department’s aquatics, recreation, and community centers. Recreation also provides event and organizational support for County and community events and special events for individuals with disabilities. Examples include:

- Pooch Pool Party at Wheaton/Glenmont Pool;
- Burtonsville Days Celebration at the Praisner Community Center;
- Germantown Oktoberfest;
- World of Montgomery Fall Festival; and
- The Blue Crab Boogie and Backyard BBQ for individuals with disabilities.

Joint Events. The Department of Parks and Department of Recreation also jointly organize and administer special events at times during the year. Examples of these joint special events during 2008 included the Senior Olympics, Germantown Glory fireworks, and various other walks, parades, and fairs. For joint events, the Department of Parks will often provide the facility/location and pay for the associated costs such as Park Police support. The Department of Recreation will plan and implement the activities that occur during the event.

B. Recreation Program Administrative Functions

This section provides an overview of three selected administrative functions of the Department of Recreation and Department of Parks that relate to recreation programs: program registration, marketing and outreach, and program feedback/evaluation.

1. Program Registration

The Department of Parks and Department of Recreation have independent administrative structures for program registration. The Department of Parks manages its program registration system through the Enterprise Division. The Department of Recreation manages its program registration system through the Affiliated Services Team.

The departments both offer three modes of program registration: by phone, registration form (mail, fax, or drop off), or online. Separate program registration forms for both departments are located in the Program Guide. Users must submit separate registrations and payment for Department of Recreation and Department of Parks programs.

Online Registration and User Accounts. While having the same structure, the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation operate independent online registration systems.

- **ParkPass** – ParkPass is the Department of Parks’ online registration system. Customers can use this online system to register and pay for classes, programs (including summer camps), and available court time at the indoor tennis centers, but must first sign-up for a ParkPass account and receive a unique customer number and pin to be able to register.
- **RecWeb** – RecWeb is the Department of Recreation’s online registration system. Customers can use this online system to register and pay for classes and programs, but must first sign-up for a RecWeb account and receive a unique customer number and pin to be able to register.

While the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation administer registration systems independently, the departments both use the same information technology software (CLASS) for program registration and facility booking functions.⁴ However, customers cannot use their ParkPass number to sign up for classes through RecWeb, and vice versa.

Financial Assistance. Both departments offer financial assistance to eligible program users. The Department of Recreation provides financial assistants to residents that receive public assistance from other Montgomery County departments. Those who qualify for financial assistance receive a set dollar amount of credit that they can use during that year based on the number of individuals in the family.

⁴ Community Use of Public Facilities also utilizes the same software.

The Department of Recreation does not allow residents to use financial assistance for sports leagues, gift certificates, supplemental fees, or payments on existing account balances. A copy of the Department of Recreation's financial assistance procedures and application is included in the appendix at ©87. In Calendar Year 2007, Recreation reports that it provided \$784,000 in financial assistance to residents.

The Department of Parks has a Fee Reduction Program for eligible program participants. To receive the fee reduction, an applicant must receive other forms of public assistance, meet income eligibility criteria, or be verified as eligible for financial assistance by the Department of Recreation. Those who qualify receive either a 50% fee reduction for program registrations or facility bookings, or receive a discount coupon book for a 50% fee reduction to use various park amenities. A copy of the Department of Parks' fee reduction procedures and application is included in the appendix at ©89.

Customer Service. Both departments have customer service staff that, as part of their duties, assist residents with any questions or difficulties they may have with the program registration process. Staff from both departments report that there is often confusion among residents about which department they are supposed to call or register with for programs, particularly since the programs are listed in the same guide.

2. Marketing and Outreach

Both departments perform marketing and outreach functions to promote their recreation programs. The Department of Parks coordinates its marketing and outreach efforts through its Park Information and Customer Service Team. The Department of Recreation performs marketing and outreach through its Affiliated Services Team and within its various programs. Some of the departments' marketing and outreach efforts are described below.

Quarterly Program Guide. The departments jointly produce and publish the quarterly *Montgomery County Guide: Recreation and Park Programs* ("Program Guide"). The departments compile the Program Guide four times a year, which is divided into two color-coded sections providing a separate listing of programs and events offered by the Department of Recreation and those offered by the Department of Parks. The Program Guide is available in hard copy and online. It includes information on how to register for the programs listed in the Guide. According to staff from both departments, the Program Guide is the primary form of recreation program advertising for both the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation.

Summer Camp Guide. Both departments publish separate Summer Camp Program Guides, which are available in print or online. Each department's summer camp guide list the various summer camp and clinics it offers and provides information on how to register. Department of Parks staff report that they have requested consideration of publishing a joint summer camp guide.

County Cable Montgomery. Both departments provide programming for County Cable Montgomery. The “Destination Recreation” show highlights various recreational programs offered by the Department of Recreation. The “The Parks Show” provides information on a variety of park facts, features, events, and facilities – including The Department of Parks’ recreational programs.

Flyers, Pamphlets, Brochures. Both departments produce a variety of written marketing materials in the form of flyers, pamphlets, brochures, booklets, etc. to promote programs, events, and facilities. Both departments also advertise in local newsletters, magazines, and other publications.

Websites. Both departments have information on programs, activities, and facilities available through their websites. The Department of Recreation’s website must follow the website procedures and protocols established by the County’s Department of Technology Services. The Department of Parks must follow the website procedures and protocols established by the Montgomery County Park and Planning Commission.

3. Program Feedback/Evaluation

The Department of Parks and Department of Recreation each have formal feedback and program evaluation mechanisms.

Department of Parks. The Department of Parks coordinates its program feedback and evaluation efforts through one staff member in the Park Information and Customer Services Division. Parks has three primary methods to obtain feedback on programs and facilities: feedback cards; evaluations forms; and an online survey. The feedback cards are available at all Park facilities, and users may drop them in boxes also located at the facilities or return them through the mail. The Department of Parks also provides evaluation forms to all participants at the conclusion of all Department programs. The Department’s website also includes an online “How Are We Doing?” survey that can be accessed at any time. The Department publishes quarterly and annual “How Are We Doing?” reports that, for each park facility, summarize survey and feedback information received from all three sources. Department of Parks staff report that the department has used the feedback obtained to adjust existing programs and assess interest in new programs.

Department of Recreation. The Department of Recreation coordinates its program feedback and evaluation efforts through one staff member in the Director’s Office and volunteers who help tabulate data. The Department has two primary methods to obtain feedback on programs and facilities: program evaluation forms and online surveys. Evaluation forms are distributed to all participants at the conclusion of a Recreation program. The Department currently has three different online surveys available on its website: a “Recreation Customer Service Survey;” a “Winter 2008 Basketball Customer Survey;” and a “Summer 2008 Camps and Programs Customer Survey.” Staff report that the Department uses feedback to assess the program quality and content, the registration process, facility condition, and instructor quality.

Chapter VI. Interdepartmental Coordination of Recreation Programs

This chapter summarizes how the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Department of Parks and County Department of Recreation work together to coordinate the delivery of recreation programming. This chapter is organized as follows:

- **Part A** summarizes formal agreements between the departments; and
- **Part B** describes the coordination of recreation programs and services in practice.

A. Formal Coordination Agreements

The formal coordination agreements between the departments include facility and/or property leases and memorandums of understanding.

1. Facility and/or Property Leases

The Department of Recreation operates several recreational facilities located on Department of Parks' property, as shown in Table 6-1. In each case, the departments have developed formal lease agreements related to the operations of the facility. The County Government has full responsibility for programming, operation, and maintenance of these facilities except for the Wheaton Recreation Center and the Olney Skate Park, which are maintained by M-NCPPC.

Table 6-1: Facilities Operated by the Department of Recreation on M-NCPPC Property

Facility Type	Facility Name
Pools	Germantown Indoor Swim Center
	Montgomery Aquatic Swim Center
	Bethesda Outdoor Pool
	Long Branch Outdoor Pool
	Wheaton/Glenmont Outdoor Pool
Recreation Centers	Gwendolyn Coffield Recreation Center
	Good Hope Recreation Center
	Leland Recreation Center
	Long Branch Recreation Center
	Plum Gar Recreation Center
	Wheaton Recreation Center
Skate Park	Olney Manor Skate Park

Source: M-NCPPC Department of Parks and County Department of Recreation

2. Memorandums of Understanding

In an effort to improve service delivery and coordination, the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation have signed several Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) regarding various programs and services. Table 6-2 lists and summarizes the four MOUs between the departments signed between 1984 and 2004.

Table 6-2: Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation

Year	MOU Title	Purpose
1984	<i>Development of Local Parks and Recreational Parks and Leasing of Indoor Recreation Facilities</i>	Coordinates the planning and development of new local parks and lists the lease conditions of indoor recreation facilities.
1995	<i>Memorandum of Understanding between the Maryland-National Capital Park Police Montgomery County and Montgomery County's Department of Recreation</i>	Coordinates the provision of public safety services at recreational facilities.
1996	<i>Athletic Field Maintenance</i>	Outlines the responsibilities of each department with regard to the maintenance of baseball and softball fields.
2004	<i>Memorandum of Understanding between the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation</i>	Clarifies and details the intended working relationship between the departments in 10 functional areas.

Source: M-NCPPC Department of Parks and County Department of Recreation

2004 MOU. In July 2004, the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation entered into an MOU to clarify the working relationship between the departments in ten functional agreement areas (attached at ©93). The 2004 *Memorandum of Understanding between the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation* supercedes the previous MOU agreements between the two departments, and includes goals and detailed action steps for each of the areas of coordination. The stated intent of the 2004 MOU is to:

...result in a higher level of departmental management cooperation, operational efficiency, program and facility planning and development, and the overall enhancement in the quality of services provided for our Parks and Recreation customers.¹

¹ "Memorandum of Understanding between the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation." July 21, 2004.

Table 6-3 lists the 10 agreement areas of the 2004 MOU along with the stated coordination goals for each. The action steps for each agreement area, along with the implementation in practice, are reviewed beginning on the next page.

Table 6-3: Agreement Areas of the 2004 Memorandum of Understanding

Agreement Area	Goal
Scheduling/Permitting of Programs and Facilities	Maximize the use of recreation facilities through efficient and equitable scheduling and permitting.
Park/Recreation Development/Community Planning	Share information on programs, users, and facilities; and jointly participate in park and recreation planning activities.
Policy Development	Provide opportunities for feedback and coordination between the agencies regarding public use policies.
Budgets	Provide opportunities for early and routine communication on cross-cutting budget issues.
Payment for Services	Process and execute the payment of financial obligations between departments.
Security	Provide for appropriate safety and security protection for recreation programs.
Automation	Coordinate the development, utilization, and management of automated services to enhance agency cooperation and provide customer service.
Shared Resources	Provide a process and procedure by which customers and Departmental staff will benefit from the resource sharing.
Community Relations	Serve as conduits between the agencies and a link to the community for information, advocacy, and participation in recreational events and programs that are sponsored or co-sponsored by the two agencies.
Accountability	Assign staff responsibility for each action area, and jointly evaluate the progress toward accomplishing the MOU goals and action steps.

Source: M-NCPPC Department of Parks and County Department of Recreation

B. Coordination of Recreation Programs and Services in Practice

This section describes the action steps for each agreement area contained in the 2004 Memorandum of Understanding, and how the two departments have implemented these coordination initiatives in practice.

1. Scheduling/Permitting of Programs and Facilities

The Department of Recreation is the largest user of Department of Parks fields and facilities, and must arrange for the use and payment of these parks and facilities through a permitting process. To achieve the goal of maximizing the use of facilities through efficient and equitable scheduling and permitting, the MOU includes the following action steps:

**2004 Memorandum of Understanding
Scheduling/Permitting – Selected Action Steps**

- The Recreation Department will submit coordinated facility requests in compliance with the Department of Parks established procedures and timeframes and will receive priority consideration over all other users;
- The Parks Department will process and return the requested permits within jointly established timeframes; and
- The Departments will establish a joint committee of staff who will annually review and modify the reservation process as necessary.

Implementation in Practice. According to staff from both departments, the scheduling and permitting of fields and facilities works fairly well in practice. However, not all of the specific action steps have been implemented and staff indicate that there are still opportunities to improve coordination in this area.

Department of Recreation staff report submitting facility requests to Department of Parks in compliance with established procedures and timeframes, and Parks staff report giving priority consideration to the Department of Recreation. The Department of Parks has an “Athletic Field Use Permit Policy” (attached at ©105) that includes permit application periods for each season and criteria for determining permit requests. Organizations given “First Priority” are allowed to submit permit requests two weeks before other applicants. The policy lists the Department of Recreation as a “First Priority” organization along with the City of Takoma Park, adopt-a-field groups, public/private partnerships or other contractual agreements, and special event/tournament requests.

The Department of Parks’ permit policies and information do not, however, include a jointly established timeframe for returning approved permits. Also, while staff report that the departments often discuss building and field availability during their quarterly meetings, the departments have not established a joint committee of staff to annually review and modify the reservation process.

Other permit or scheduling issues that, according to staff from either department, offer opportunities for coordination improvement include:

- Permit approval and return timeframes;
- Notification procedures when permitted facilities become unavailable due to unscheduled or unforeseen events; and
- Regular release of unneeded fields prior to the start of each season to provide other county residents access and use of these amenities.

The Department of Parks reports that it is working to improve the overall application and permitting process. According to the Montgomery County Planning Board's *Fall 2008 Semi-Annual Report*, the Permit Office is looking to streamline the process, reduce paperwork, and enhance online capabilities such as issuing field permits electronically.²

2. Park/Recreation Development/Community Planning

The MOU stated that, historically, both departments independently reviewed and commented on both park and general master plans during the plan development and review process. To achieve the goal of sharing information on programs, users, and facilities and to jointly participate in planning activities, the MOU includes the following action steps:

**2004 Memorandum of Understanding
Park/Recreation Development and Planning – Selected Action Steps**

- The Recreation Department will actively participate in all Parks Department planning processes when appropriate; and
- Staff representatives from both departments will participate in facility planning and review meetings.

Implementation in Practice. Staff report that the departments do coordinate and participate when planning a new facility or property that may have impacts on the budgets or operations of the other department. Staff did emphasize earlier coordination during the project development and review process is beneficial.

3. Policy Development

Both departments develop policies, guidelines, and practices related to their respective recreation programs and facilities. To achieve the goal of providing opportunities for feedback and coordination between the agencies regarding new or revised policies that affect park and recreation customers, the MOU includes the following action steps:

² Montgomery County Planning Board, *Fall 2008 Semi-Annual Report*, pg. 45.

**2004 Memorandum of Understanding
Policy Development – Selected Action Steps**

- Circulate all drafts of new or revised public use policies between the agencies for input at least three months prior to the first presentation to the Planning Board or County Executive;
- Discuss all new or revised public use policies with appropriate Advisory Boards and affected groups a minimum of one month prior to submission to the Planning Board or County Executive;
- Meet and mutually discuss/agree on reasonable implementation dates for any new recreation program and/or facility affecting each department; and
- Take into consideration the fiscal impacts of all agreements for new recreation programs or facilities on the operating budgets of each department.

Implementation in Practice. This area of the MOU has been somewhat followed in practice, but differing views from staff in the departments indicate that type and level of coordination in this area has fallen short of intentions. OLO heard differing viewpoints from the staff in either department related to the level of coordination and consultation that occurs when a department develops new policies or programs. For example:

- Staff from both departments agree that there is no formal mechanism in place for the departments to review and have input on each others new programs;
- Staff from both departments report that there is very little contact or consideration of budget impacts between departments when creating new programs; and
- Staff from the departments have differing viewpoints on whether new or revised policies are routinely circulated within the timeframes required by the MOU.

4. Budgets

The 1993 Merger Report included increased interagency coordination in the budget planning and preparation process as one of the alternatives to improve efficiency without merging the departments. In the 2004 MOU, the departments agreed to increase coordination on operating budget and capital improvements information. To achieve the goal of providing opportunities for early and routine communication on cross-cutting budget issues, the MOU includes the following action steps:

**2004 Memorandum of Understanding
Budgets – Selected Action Steps**

- Operating Budget – hold joint, bi-annual worksessions to discuss budgetary issues that may impact the provision of programs, services, and/or facilities.
- Capital Improvements Program – hold joint, annual staff worksession to discuss CIP issues; jointly develop park and recreation facility needs and standards; jointly maintain an inventory of parks, recreation programs, and improvements; and jointly analyze and prioritize new projects.

Implementation in Practice. Since the 2004 MOU was established, the departments have not implemented the budget action steps. Both departments' budget practices, policies, and decision-making processes operate primarily independent of each other. However, staff from both departments expressed support for improving budget communication and discussing their respective budget priorities each fiscal year. Also, M-NCPPC and the Montgomery County Advisory Boards jointly host a "CIP Public Forum" in advance of every CIP in order to solicit public comment on park and recreation capital projects.

5. Payment for Services

The 2004 MOU reported that processing of financial transactions had been a problem. To meet the goal of expedient processing and execution of payments between departments, the MOU includes the following action steps:

**2004 Memorandum of Understanding
Payment for Services – Selected Action Steps**

- Schedules for billing and payments must comply with the paying agencies procurement and payment schedules;
- Consider cross-training staff in each department's billing and payment processes; and
- Provide detailed verification of fees for services that require financial reimbursement, according to the respective department's cost recovery policy.

Implementation in Practice. As with other agreement areas of the 2004 MOU, some of the action steps have been implemented while others, such as the cross-training of staff, have not. The billing and processing of payments between the two departments that occurs on the most regular basis relates to the rental of park fields and facilities by the Department of Recreation. Recreation staff report coordinating payment schedules with the Department of Parks' billing staff, and indicated that Recreation generally pays all invoices within 60 days. One area for improvement, identified by Recreation staff, is to jointly develop a standard invoice form that would include all the itemized details (such as rain-out or cancellation days) needed prior to executing final payment. Department of Recreation staff stated that developing standardized forms could also involve Community Use of Public Facilities, so all agencies are using the same forms.

6. Security

The departments had previously developed a separate MOU to coordinate the provision of safety and security services, and the 2004 MOU updated the prior agreement. To achieve the goal of providing appropriate safety and security services for recreation programs, the MOU includes the following action steps:

**2004 Memorandum of Understanding
Security – Selected Action Steps**

- The departments will develop and periodically update a security agreement;
- The Recreation Department will pay for Park Police officers who provide security services for Recreation programs or facilities outside of regular duty time; and
- The departments will create public safety plans for each facility.

Implementation in Practice. Staff from both departments indicated that ensuring safety and security at facilities receives a high priority and report that coordination works well. Park Police regularly patrol all Department of Parks land, including Department of Recreation-owned or operated facilities on park land. Additionally, the departments' security agreement provides that the Park Police are the primary contact for any event on park land. If the Department of Recreation requires security services for any program on park land, staff reports coordinating with the Park Police to provide those services. As required by the 2004 MOU, when Park Police officers are off-duty, the Department of Recreation pays the negotiated rate for overtime in the Fraternal Order of Police collective bargaining agreement.

7. Automation

To achieve the goal of coordinating the development, utilization, and management of automated services to enhance agency cooperation and provide customer services, the MOU includes the following action steps:

**2004 Memorandum of Understanding
Automation – Selected Action Steps**

- Establish an inter-agency team to coordinate the development of a shared online customer needs index and user survey to determine recreation needs and measure program satisfaction;
- Work cooperatively to identify and use compatible technologies to enhance the delivery of recreational services; and
- Establish “read only” access to each other’s database to determine facility usage trends and customer profile information.

Implementation in Practice. The departments use some compatible technologies, but have not implemented most of the action steps detailed in the MOU. The departments have not developed a shared online customer needs index and user survey. Instead, both departments obtain survey information independently and Department of Recreation staff report that a customer needs survey has not been developed due to budget constraints. Additionally, neither department provides “read only” access to their database.

In terms of compatible technologies, the departments do use the same software system for facility booking and program registration, including online program registration.³ While the software is the same, the technology is administered independently by each Department. For example:

- The registration programs have separate names (ParkPass for Department of Parks and RecWeb for Department of Recreation) and websites;
- Users must create separate accounts to register for Department of Parks or Department of Recreation programs; and
- The departments have separate contracts with the software vendor.

Staff from both departments noted that the dual registration systems can be confusing to residents, and staff often receive calls and questions about the other department's programs.

8. Shared Resources

To achieve the goal of providing a process and procedure by which customers and department staff will benefit from the sharing of resources, the 2004 MOU includes the following action steps:

**2004 Memorandum of Understanding
Shared Resources – Selected Action Steps**

- Create a more integrated link between department websites;
- Establish a more collaborative effort in the development of new or expanded public/private partnerships; and
- Share staff resources and/or exchange personnel to fully utilize the skills and talents in both organizations.

Implementation in Practice. In practice, the departments have not implemented most of the actions steps. Currently, the Department of Parks website has links to the Department of Recreation website, but Recreation does not have links to Parks. Both websites offer the joint quarterly program guide online. The departments have also not initiated any formal efforts to share staff resources or exchange personnel. However, staff from both departments provided examples of informal resource sharing for certain programs or when jointly conducting special events.

Also, it does not appear that the departments have established a more collaborative effort related to public/private partnerships. For example, while the Planning Board adopted a new policy to govern the review and approval of public/private partnerships in 2007 (attached at ©55), the policy does not call for any input or review from Department of Recreation representatives.

³ Community Use of Public Facilities and the Department of Public Libraries also use the same software.

9. Community Relations

The MOU states that both departments are responsible for promoting recreational programs and services and share major segments of the population as primary customers. To achieve the goal of providing a better link to the community for information, advocacy, and participation in recreational events and programs, the MOU includes the following action steps:

**2004 Memorandum of Understanding
Community Relations – Selected Action Steps**

- Maintain a joint staff committee to meet quarterly to develop marketing strategies for the County's recreation programs and facilities;
- Co-sponsor and promote special events by coordinating dates, locations, scheduling, and marketing of events;
- Enhance volunteer and partner support among the departments;
- Work together to develop and implement strategies to encourage additional participation in park and recreation programs and facilities.

Implementation in Practice. The implementation of the community relations action steps has been mixed. The departments do coordinate on one of the primary forms of advertising for recreation programs, the production of the seasonal Program Guide. In 2004, Department of Recreation and Department of Parks began jointly producing the Program Guide, which is divided into two color-coded sections to provide a separate listing of programs and events offered by each department.

The departments report that they have not established quarterly meetings to develop marketing strategies, nor have they jointly developed and implemented strategies to increase the participation of County residents not using Park or Recreation programs, services, or facilities. One opportunity for improvement in this area, suggested by Department of Parks staff, is for Recreation to designate a lead marketing contact as Parks has done. Informally, the departments have assisted with the marketing of each other's events, such as putting up program fliers in community or event centers.

The departments do co-sponsor and promote specific special events. Examples of co-sponsored events during this past year include the Senior Olympics and the Germantown Glory fireworks display. However, the departments often do not coordinate dates, locations, scheduling, and formal marketing of separate events. For example, two large special events, the Department of Park's Harvest Festival and the Department of Recreation's Oktoberfest, were scheduled on the same day in the fall of 2008.

10. Accountability

The 2004 MOU has one action step in this area: for each department to designate a lead MOU coordinator to manage the ongoing implementation of the MOU. In practice, it appears that many of the goals and actions steps detailed in the MOU have not been fully implemented.

Chapter VII. Findings

This chapter summarizes the Office of Legislative Oversight's (OLO) findings on the organization of recreation programs across the Maryland-National Capital Planning Commission's (M-NCPPC) Montgomery County Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Government's Department of Recreation.

This OLO study defined recreation programs as: organized recreation activities administered and provided by the Department of Parks or Department of Recreation through career staff, seasonal staff, contract instructors, or trained volunteers. OLO reviewed the recreation programs provided by the departments in seven categories: sports; summer camps and clinics; classes; trips and excursions; special events; recreational park amenities; and athletic field permitting and maintenance.¹

In sum, the departments offer a mix of similar and unique recreation programs. The County Council appropriates funds for recreation programs in both departments, but has never provided the departments with any direct policy guidance as to what type of programs each should (or should not) provide. As a result, the Department of Parks and the Department of Recreation provide a broad array of recreation programs, the details of which have evolved over time. While some effort is made by both departments to coordinate activities and administrative functions, in practice, the two departments operate largely as two independent entities.

The presentation of OLO's findings is organized into the following topic areas:

- Governance Structure;
- Recreation Programs Offered by Each Department;
- Comparison of Recreation Programs;
- Funding for Recreation Programs;
- Administrative Functions; and
- Interdepartmental Coordination.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Finding #1: State and County law both assign recreation programming responsibilities in Montgomery County.

In 1927, the Maryland General Assembly created the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) to develop and operate public park systems and provide land use planning for the physical development of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. Among the responsibilities assigned to the Montgomery County Planning Board was the authority for administering recreation programming.

¹ Chapters III and IV identify the array of recreation programming provided by the Department of Parks and the Department of Recreation. Chapter V compares the type of recreation programming within these five categories.

In 1951, an amendment to State law authorized the transfer of authority for recreation programming to Montgomery County Government. The State legislation also authorized the transfer of all funds derived from the recreation tax to the County, but stated that M-NCPPC retained possession of all its park lands as well as retained the responsibility to maintain these properties.

In 1951, the County Council subsequently enacted the Montgomery County Recreation Act. This local law authorized the creation of a County Government Department of Recreation to: "...establish, develop and operate a coordinated and comprehensive public recreational program, designed to meet the needs of all age groups of the citizens from a community, educational, fraternal, athletic and social standpoint."²

Finding #2: In 1993, the County Council examined the possibility of consolidating the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation.

In February 1992, the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee requested that the directors of the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation jointly prepare a report on the possibility of consolidating the two departments. In January 1993, the directors transmitted the final "Merger Report" to the Council and Executive.

The report reviewed the potential benefits and costs of a possible merger, and identified structural barriers that would need to be addressed prior to any merger. The Merger Report concluded by stating that, "from a philosophical and professional point of view, a merger between the Parks and Recreation Department would ultimately provide the best level of recreational services to the citizens of Montgomery County."

However, even though the report listed reasons to proceed with a merger, it went on to state that "...neither Director is comfortable with a recommendation that would remove their Department from its existing parent organization."³ Instead, as an alternative to a merger, the directors identified opportunities for cooperative efforts to enhance the service delivery of the two departments.

² Chapter 8, 1951 Laws of Montgomery County, Maryland.

³ Parks and Recreation Merger Report, January 8, 1993, pg. 10.

Finding #3: Today, the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation both continue to provide recreation programs in Montgomery County.

The M-NCPPC Montgomery County Department of Parks operates and maintains 408 parks on more than 34,000 acres of parkland throughout the County. In addition to a variety of management, planning, and maintenance functions, the Department of Parks provides a variety of recreation programs.

The Montgomery County Department of Recreation operates 32 recreation facilities across the County and offers many recreation programs. In addition to recreation programs open to the general public, the Department of Recreation works with government agencies, private providers, and community-based organizations to target specialized programming to three specific populations: seniors, persons with disabilities, and teens.

RECREATION PROGRAMS OFFERED BY EACH DEPARTMENT

Finding #4: The Department of Recreation provides recreation programs in five categories.

The Department of Recreation provides recreation programs in five categories: sports, summer camps and clinics, classes and activities, trips and excursions, and special events.

Sports. The Department of Recreation provides year-round sports leagues, classes, lessons, and instructional clinics for youth and adults in multiple sports. The Department's sports programs also include:

- Aquatics programs provided at the County's seven outdoor and four indoor pools;
- Operation of the Olney Manor Skate Park; and
- The Rec Extra and Sports Academies programs offered in partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services, Police Department, and Montgomery County Public Schools.

Summer Camps and Clinics. The Department of Recreation provides summer camps and clinics for children. The types of camps and clinics offered vary in focus, and include specialized teen and therapeutic recreation camps.

Classes and Activities. The Department of Recreation provides classes and activities for all ages through contract instructors. The type of classes and activities offered vary widely, and include specialized classes for seniors, persons with disabilities, and teens.

Trips and Excursions. The Department of Recreation provides trips and excursions for three groups: seniors, persons with disabilities, and teens. The types of trips and excursions for all groups vary in terms of destination, cost, and duration.

Special Events. The Department of Recreation programs special events at aquatics facilities, community centers, and other locations. The Department also provides staff support for County and community events, including festivals and community days.

Finding #5: The Department of Parks provides recreation programs in seven categories.

The Department of Parks provides recreation programs in seven categories: sports, summer camps and clinics, classes and activities, trips and excursions, recreational park amenities, special events, and athletic field permitting and maintenance.

Sports Programs. The Department of Parks provides year-round tennis, ice skating, and ice hockey programs for all ages. Programs are offered primarily through the Department's two indoor tennis facilities and two ice arenas.

Summer Camps and Clinics. The Department of Parks provides a variety of summer camps and clinics for children. The summer camps and clinics are located and organized through the Department's nature centers, public gardens, and enterprise facilities.

Classes and Activities. The Department of Parks provides a variety of classes and activities for all ages. These classes and activities are located and organized through the Department's nature centers, public gardens, and enterprise facilities.

Trips and Excursions. The Department of Parks provides trips and excursions primarily for adults, organized through the Department's nature centers, public gardens, and enterprise facilities. The types of trips and excursions vary in terms of destination and duration.

Recreational Park Amenities. The Department of Parks operates and staff four types of recreational amenities at selected parks: boat rentals, trains and carousel, Germantown Splash Park and miniature golf, and Little Bennett Campground.

Special Events. The Department of Parks programs special events throughout the year. These events are held at various park facilities and are organized and administered by blend of staff and volunteers.

Athletic Field Permitting and Maintenance. The Department of Parks administers the permitting and maintenance of nearly 300 athletic fields. These fields are used for organized youth and adult sports programs run by other organizations, as well as for spontaneous play and pick-up games.

COMPARISON OF RECREATION PROGRAMS

OLO compared the array of recreation programs offered by the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation by categorizing the programs and identifying which ones are similar vs. unique. In addition to the type of program, other factors impact the “uniqueness” of an individual program, such as duration, age range, program fees, program capacity, staffing structure, and location.

Finding #6: Both the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation offer sports programs, but the specific types of sports do not overlap.

The Department of Recreation offers programs in 10 different types of sports. The Department of Parks provides sports programs in tennis, ice skating, and ice hockey.

Sports Programming

Type	Recreation	Parks
Tennis		✓
Ice Skating		✓
Ice Hockey		✓
Soccer	✓	
Basketball	✓	
T-ball	✓	
Field Hockey	✓	
Softball	✓	
Football	✓	
Volleyball	✓	
Fencing	✓	
Martial Arts	✓	
Aquatics	✓	

Staff from both departments report that the current sports programming split has evolved over time, and the departments have worked to avoid duplicative offerings. For example, within the past few years, in an effort to avoid duplicating what Parks was offering, the Department of Recreation stopped offering tennis programs.

Finding #7: Both the departments offer summer camps and clinics. Of the ten types of camps/clinics offered, six types are unique and four are similar.

During the 2008 summer camp season, the Department of Recreation offered 84 camps and clinics and the Department of Parks offered 69 camps and clinics. These camps and clinics can be categorized into ten types. Four types of summer camp programs were offered by both departments, and are described in more detail below.

Summer Camps and Clinics

Type	Recreation	Parks
Nature/Science/Outdoors	✓	✓
Sports/Fitness	✓	✓
Art	✓	✓
Multi-Dimensional	✓	✓
Cultural/Heritage		✓
Scouting Clinics		✓
Drama	✓	
Dance/Performing Arts	✓	
Therapeutic Recreation	✓	
Other	✓	

- **Nature/Science/Outdoors Camps.** In 2008, the Department of Parks offered 32 nature/science/outdoors camps while the Department of Recreation offered six. The Department of Parks' camp themes varied across a range of topics, including: camping, fishing, geology, insects and animals, wildlife ecology, meteorology, resource conservation, and nature exploration. The Department of Recreation's camp themes included nature exploration, space and rocketry, and science experiments.
- **Sports/Fitness Camps.** In 2008, the Department of Recreation offered 33 sports/fitness camps and the Department of Parks offered 11. The specific camps offered by each mirrored the division of general sports programs between the departments (see Finding #6). The Department of Parks offered tennis, ice skating, and hockey camps, and the Department of Recreation offered camps in all other sports.
- **Art Camps.** In 2008, the Department of Recreation offered 13 art camps while the Department of Parks offered two. Most of the Department of Recreation's art camps covered a variety of art mediums, skills, and techniques such as drawing, painting, and sculpture. The Department of Parks' art camps, offered at Brookside Gardens, covered a variety of art techniques including drawing, painting, and collages.
- **Multi-Dimensional Camps.** Multi-dimensional camps are those that incorporate several types of programs into a single camp experience. In 2008, the Department of Recreation offered nine multi-dimensional camps, which included Recreation's teen camps and drop-in Summer Fun Centers for school-aged children. The Department of Parks offered two "Week in the Park" multi-dimensional camps.

Finding #8: Both the departments offer classes and activities. Of the 15 types of classes and activities offered, 11 are unique and four are similar.

During 2008, the Department of Recreation offered over 900 classes and activities and the Department of Parks offered over 750 classes and activities.⁴ These classes and activities can be categorized into 15 types. The four types of classes and activities offered by both departments are described in more detail below.

Classes and Activities

Type	Recreation	Parks
Arts and Crafts	✓	✓
Cooking	✓	✓
School Break Programs	✓	✓
Wellness/Exercise and Fitness	✓	✓
Nature/Science/Outdoors		✓
Homeschool Classes		✓
Dance	✓	
Martial Arts	✓	
Music	✓	
Instructional Sports Clinics	✓	
Language	✓	
Dog Obedience	✓	
Age-Specific Programming	✓	
Therapeutic Recreation ⁵	✓	
Other	✓	

- **Arts and Crafts Classes** – In 2008, the Department of Recreation offered around 115 art and craft classes and the Department of Parks offered 80. The Department of Recreation’s arts and crafts classes covered a wider array of content, including: general crafts; drawing and painting; pottery; jewelry-making; cartooning; and photography. Most of the Department Parks’ classes fell into two content areas: seasonal/holiday crafts and nature/outdoors-themed arts and crafts.
- **Cooking Classes** – In 2008, the Department of Recreation offered more than 90 different cooking classes while the Department of Parks about 20. The Department of Recreation offered a variety of cooking programs each season, including: kids and family cooking; wine selection and wine-making; seasonal and holiday dishes; and specialty food classes. The Department of Parks offered cooking classes that usually incorporated an outdoors theme; class offerings included vegetarian cooking, braising, and cooking with fruits.

⁴ OLO compiled this list based on programs listed as classes and activities in the “Program Guide” from winter, spring, summer, and fall 2008. OLO based this count on the unique class titles (e.g., “Basic Photography”). If a specific class was offered more than once, it was only counted once.

⁵ One of the Department of Parks public-private partners, Great and Small, provides therapeutic horseback riding at M-NCPPC’s Rickman Farm Horse Park.

- **School Break Programs** – School break programs are those held for school-aged children on weekdays when public schools are not in session. In 2008, the Department of Recreation offered six school break programs located in community centers that included both one-day classes and weeklong classes during longer breaks. Beginning in fall 2008, the Department of Parks offered a “Park Play Day” school break program at both the Wheaton and Cabin John ice rinks. The Department of Parks only offered this school break program as one-day classes.
- **Wellness/Exercise and Fitness Classes** – The Department of Recreation offered over 90 wellness, exercise, and fitness classes, while the Department of Parks offered seven classes in two areas. Both of the types provided by Parks – yoga and tai chi – are also provided by Recreation. In 2008, the Department of Recreation offered 22 different yoga classes and seven different tai chi classes; the Department of Parks offered six different yoga classes and one tai chi class in 2008.

Finding #9: Both departments offer similar types of trips and excursions. The primary difference is the target audience for the trips and excursions.

During 2008, the Department of Recreation offered around 160 trips and excursions and the Department of Parks offered around 170 trips and excursions.

Trips and Excursions

Type	Recreation	Parks
Kayaking and Canoeing	✓	✓
Hiking/Nature	✓	✓
Museums, Cultural and Historic Sites	✓	✓
Regional Attractions	✓	✓

Both departments offer similar types of trips and excursions, such as kayaking, canoeing, hiking, and visiting regional attractions. The primary difference is the target audience for the trips. The Department of Recreation limits its trip programming to seniors (55 years and older), teens, and persons with disabilities. In comparison, the Department of Parks generally opens up its trips and excursions for adults (ages 18 and over).

Finding #10: The Department of Parks and Department of Recreation each offer special events throughout the year that are open to the community. The departments also jointly organize and administer special events.

The Department of Parks and Department of Recreation both organize special events throughout the year. Most of these events are offered free of charge and do not require pre-registration.

The Department of Parks holds its special events at various park facilities; a combination of Parks staff and volunteers organize and administer the events. Examples of Park's special events include the Underground Railroad Experience hikes and lectures and the Wings of Fancy butterfly show at Brookside Gardens.

The Department of Recreation holds its special events at different locations, including the Department's aquatics, recreation, and community centers. The Department also provides event and organizational support for County and community events and special events for individuals with disabilities. Examples of special events organized and administered by the Department of Recreation include the Germantown Oktoberfest and Pooch Pool Party at Wheaton/Glenmont Pool.

Parks and Recreation also jointly organize and administer special events at times during the year. Examples of these joint special events during 2008 included the Senior Olympics, Germantown Glory fireworks, and various other walks, parades, and fairs.

FUNDING FOR RECREATION PROGRAMS

Finding #11: In FY09, the Department of Recreation's operating budget totals \$32.4 million and includes an estimated \$11 million in revenue.

The FY09 operating budget for the Department of Recreation is \$32.4 million. The operating budget also includes \$11 million in anticipated revenue from recreation programs, recovering approximately 34% of total Department expenditures.

The Department allocates \$23.9 million to the Programs and Facilities Divisions for the direct provision of recreation programs in FY09. The remaining \$8.5 million in expenditures are for the Office of the Director, the Administration Division, and fixed costs (e.g., utilities, etc.).

The total Department of Recreation operating budget supports approximately 450 workyears for full-time, part-time, and seasonal staff. Recreation allocates about 413 workyears or 92% of its workforce to the Programs and Facilities Division.

The FY09 budgeted workyears, expenditures, and revenues for the operating costs for the Programs Division and Facilities Division are detailed in the table below.

Department of Recreation FY09 Programs and Facilities Division Budget Data (\$ in 000s)

Division	Workyears		Budgeted		Cost Recovery %
	Career	Seasonal	Expenditures	Revenue	
Programs Division					
Camps Program	5.5	30.8	\$1,665	\$1,319	79%
Classes Program	7.3	0.9	\$676	\$520	77%
Sports Program	11.0	20.8	\$2,198	\$855	39%
Teen Team	24.4	35.8	\$4,716	\$546	12%
Seniors Team	12.7	14.0	\$1,754	\$304	17%
Therapeutic Recreation Team	6.7	7.7	\$1,009	\$101	10%
Subtotal	67.5	110.0	\$12,018	\$3,644	30%
Facilities Division					
Aquatics	25.4	115	\$5,964	\$6,065	102%
Recreation Regions and Community Centers	42.6	53.2	\$5,897	\$1,245	21%
Subtotal	67.9	168.2	\$11,861	\$7,310	62%
Total	135.4	278.2	\$23,879	\$10,954	46%

Note: Budgeted expenditure and revenue numbers may not sum to the totals due to rounding.

The Department of Recreation's budget is funded primarily through Recreation Tax District revenue, and user fees and charges.⁶

Finding #12: In FY09, the approved operating budget for the Department of Parks' recreation programs is about \$19.2 million in expenditures, with an estimated \$8 million in revenue.

The \$19.2 million allocated by the Montgomery County Department of Parks for recreation programs represents approximately 20% of the Department's total approved FY09 operating budget. On the revenue side, the operating budget also includes \$8.1 million in anticipated revenue from recreation programs, recovering approximately 42% of recreation program expenditures.

The total Department of Parks operating budget supports 850 workyears for full-time, part-time, and seasonal staff. OLO estimated that Parks allocates 188.4 workyears or 22% of its workforce to recreation programs.⁷

The table below provides FY09 budget information by program category. The budget information for the summer camps, classes/activities, and trips/excursions categories are presented by the facility or division that provides them.

⁶ Chapter III provides an overview of the Recreation District Tax on page 18.

⁷ Chapter IV provides the methodology for OLO's budget and workyears estimates.

Department of Parks FY09 Recreation Programming Budget Data (\$ in 000s)

Programming Category	Workyears		Budgeted		Cost Recovery %
	Career	Seasonal	Expenditures	Revenue	
Sports Programming	16.9	34.7	\$6,370	\$5,989	94%
Nature Centers – Camps, Classes, Trips	20.4	3.8	\$2,057	\$203	10%
Public Gardens – Camps, Classes, Trips	2.6	3	\$460	\$180	39%
Enterprise Division – Camps, Classes, Trips	1	2.3	\$263	\$165	63%
Recreational Amenities	6.1	13.2	\$1,303	\$931	71%
Athletic Field Permitting and Maintenance	84.4		\$8,762	\$650	7%
Total	188.4		\$19,215	\$8,118	42%

Note: Budgeted expenditure and revenue numbers may not sum to the totals due to rounding.

In FY09, Parks allocates funding for its recreation programming from both the tax-supported Park Fund and the Enterprise Fund. The Enterprise Fund is a proprietary fund supported by user fees and other non-tax revenue sources.⁸ Of the program categories shown above, two – Nature Center Camps, Classes, and Trips and Athletic Field Permitting and Maintenance – are funded through the Park Fund. The remaining four recreation program categories shown above are funded through the Enterprise Fund.

Finding #13: The Department of Recreation and Department of Parks have separate pricing and cost recovery policies and practices.

A pricing and cost recovery policy sets pricing guidelines, as well as goals for how much of a program's cost should be recovered through user fees and how much should be subsidized by tax and other revenue.

In 2006, the Council adopted Executive Regulation 12-05, "Department of Recreation Fee Procedure," which established a formal user fee and cost recovery policy. The Fee Procedure includes five categories of programs and states the minimum percent of operating, staff, and support staff (i.e. administrative/management) costs a program must recover through user fees, as shown below. For example, user fees are the primary source of revenue for Specialized Programs, while Community Based Programs are reduced in price and subsidized by taxes and other funding sources.

⁸ The FY09 approved budget for the Enterprise Fund includes a \$619,000 subsidy from the Park Fund.

Department of Recreation Pricing Policy by Cost Recovery Category

Category	Minimum Cost Recovery	Type of Programs
Community Based Programs and Services	50% operating costs 25% staff costs 0% support staff costs	Youth sports, therapeutic recreation programs, teen programs, seniors programs
Council/Executive Initiatives	0-50% all costs	Any program assigned by the County Council or the County Executive
Specialized Programs and Services	100% operating costs 100% staff costs 50% support staff costs	Aquatics classes, adult classes and sports leagues, summer camps and clinics
Partnerships	50% all costs	Any events or programs where Recreation shares event staff or operating costs.
Rentals	100% all costs	Exclusive use of a facility or space

The Department of Parks' does not have a universal pricing and cost recovery policy, instead policies can vary by program type and funding source. For Enterprise Fund recreation programs, all program costs are intended to be recovered primarily through user fees and charges as a matter of Fund policy. Other programs, such as athletic field permitting, have a fee structure approved by the Planning Board but do not have a specific cost recovery requirement. The Department of Parks also coordinates field and facility permitting fees with the County's Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF).

ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

The Department of Parks and Department of Recreation separately administer program registration, marketing and outreach, and program feedback.

Finding #14: The two departments offer similar ways to register for recreation programs, but operate separate program registration systems.

The Department of Parks and Department of Recreation both offer the same three modes of program registration: by phone, registration form (mail, fax, or drop off), or online. However, users must register and pay separately for Recreation and Parks programs. Staff from both departments noted that the dual registration systems can be confusing to the public, and staff often receive calls and questions about the other department's programs.

The departments operate independent online program registration systems; ParkPass and RecWeb. Both use the same software and require customers to sign up for a user account number. However, users must obtain unique account numbers from each department to sign up for programs; in other words, an individual cannot use his or her ParkPass number to pin to sign up for classes through RecWeb, and vice versa.

Finding #15: While the departments jointly produce the quarterly Program Guide, most other marketing and outreach functions are done separately.

The Department of Parks and Department of Recreation both perform marketing and outreach functions to promote their recreational programs. The departments jointly produce and publish the quarterly *Montgomery County Guide: Recreation and Park Programs* (“Program Guide”), which is divided into two color-coded sections providing a separate listing of programs and events offered by the Department of Recreation and those offered by the Department of Parks.

However, while the quarterly Program Guide is jointly produced, the departments separately:

- Publish Summer Camp Program Guides;
- Provide programming for County Cable Montgomery;
- Produce a variety of written marketing materials in the form of flyers, pamphlets, brochures, booklets, etc. to promote programs, events, and facilities;
- Advertise in local newsletters, magazines, and other publications; and
- Provide information on programs, activities, and facilities through their websites.

Finding #16: The Department of Parks and Department of Recreation have separate formal feedback mechanisms to assess and evaluate recreation programming.

The Department of Parks has three formal methods to obtain feedback on programs and facilities: feedback cards; evaluations forms; and an online survey. The Department publishes quarterly and annual reports that summarize survey and feedback information received from all three sources. The Department of Parks staff report that the Department has used the feedback obtained through these efforts to adjust existing recreation programs and assess interest in new programs.

The Department of Recreation has two formal methods to obtain feedback on programs and facilities: program evaluation forms and online surveys. The Department of Recreation staff report that the Department uses feedback to assess the program quality and content, the registration process, facility condition, and instructor quality.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION

Finding #17: Since 1984, the departments have entered into formal lease agreements and signed five memorandums of understanding.

The Department of Recreation operates several recreational facilities located on Department of Parks' property. Some of these facilities are owned by Montgomery County Government, others owned by M-NCPPC. In either case, the departments develop formal lease agreements related to the operations and/or maintenance of the facility on park land.

Between 1984 and 2004, the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation have entered into four Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) regarding various programs and services in an effort to improve service delivery and coordination. As shown in the table below, these agreements include planning for the development of new parks, facility lease conditions, public safety services, and recreation facility and athletic field maintenance.

Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) between Parks and Recreation

Year	MOU Title
1984	Development of Local Parks and Recreational Parks and Leasing of Indoor Recreation Facilities
1995	Memorandum of Understanding between the Maryland-National Capital Park Police Montgomery County and Montgomery County's Department of Recreation
1996	Athletic Field Maintenance
2004	Memorandum of Understanding between the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation

Finding #18: In July 2004, the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to clarify the working relationship between the departments in 10 functional agreement areas.

The table below lists the ten “functional agreement” areas and stated coordination goals of the 2004 MOU. The MOU also included detailed action steps for each area.

Agreement Areas of 2004 Memorandum of Understanding

Agreement Area	Goal
Scheduling/Permitting of Programs and Facilities	Maximize the use of recreation facilities through efficient and equitable scheduling and permitting.
Park/Recreation Development/Community Planning	Share information on programs, users, and facilities; and jointly participate in park and recreation planning activities.
Policy Development	Provide opportunities for feedback and coordination between the agencies regarding public use policies.
Budgets	Provide opportunities for early and routine communication on cross-cutting budget issues.
Payment for Services	Process and execute the payment of financial obligations between departments.
Security	Provide for appropriate safety and security protection for recreation programs.
Automation	Coordinate the development, utilization, and management of automated services to enhance agency cooperation and provide customer service.
Shared Resources	Provide a process and procedure by which customers and Departmental staff will benefit from the resource sharing.
Community Relations	Serve as conduits between the agencies and a link to the community for information, advocacy, and participation in recreational events and programs.
Accountability	Assign staff responsibility for each action area, and evaluate progress on the MOU goals and action steps.

Finding #19: To date, most of the actions steps detailed in the 2004 Memorandum of Understanding have not been fully implemented.

The 2004 MOU established a framework for coordination between the departments. To date, however, the implementation of the action steps detailed in the MOU has been mixed at best. The implementation status of key agreement areas from the MOU are summarized below.

Scheduling/Permitting. The 2004 MOU includes action steps for the submission and processing of facility permit requests between the Departments, and also states that the departments will annually review and modify the reservation process as necessary. While the scheduling and permitting of fields and facilities works fairly well in practice, not all of the specific action steps have been implemented and staff indicate that there are still opportunities to improve coordination.

Policy Development. The 2004 MOU includes action steps requiring the departments to: circulate drafts of new or revised public use policies within established timeframes; discuss implementation dates for any new recreation program or facility; and consider the fiscal impacts of new recreation programs or facilities on the operating budgets of each department. OLO heard differing views from staff in both departments related to the level of coordination and consultation on these issues that occurs in practice. However, staff from both departments agree that there is no formal mechanism in place for the departments to review and have input on each others' new programming ideas.

Budgets. The 2004 MOU states that the departments will hold bi-annual staff worksessions to discuss budgetary issues that may impact the provision of programs, services, and/or facilities, as well as annually prioritize new CIP projects. In practice, the departments do not routinely communicate with one another on budget issues that cross departmental lines. The budget practices, policies, and decision-making processes for each department continue to operate independently of each other.

Security. The 2004 MOU states that the departments create public safety plans for each facility and develop and periodically update a security agreement. Staff from both departments indicated that ensuring safety and security at facilities receives a high priority and report that coordination works well.

Automation. The 2004 MOU states that the departments would work cooperatively to identify and use compatible technologies to enhance the delivery of recreational services. This included the development of a shared online customer needs index and user survey, and establishing "read only" access to each other's customer database. While Parks and Recreation use some compatible technologies, they have separate registration systems, separate user surveys, and do not provide "read only" database access. Staff from both departments report that the dual registration systems can be confusing to residents.

Community Relations. The 2004 MOU includes action steps requiring the departments to: meet quarterly to develop marketing strategies for recreation programs; and co-sponsor and promote special events by coordinating dates, locations, scheduling, and marketing of events. The departments do coordinate on one of the primary forms of advertising for recreation programs, the production of the seasonal Program Guide, but do not meet quarterly to develop marketing strategies. While the departments do co-sponsor some special events, they often do not coordinate on separate events.

Chapter VIII. Options and Recommendation

The County Council requested this Office of Legislative Oversight study to provide the basis for an informed discussion about options for the possible restructuring of recreation programs across the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation. Four options for restructuring are listed below.

The first option proposes consolidating the management of all recreation programs under one department. The other three options maintain the existing two department structure, but provide some of the benefits that would come from consolidation.

Option A: Consolidate the management of all recreation programs under one department.

A1: Consolidate all recreation programs under management of the Montgomery County Recreation Department. Under this option, the County Government's Department of Recreation would be assigned responsibility for planning, managing, and delivering all recreation programs. The Department of Parks would continue to perform its mission to manage the Montgomery County park system, and carry-out its many other functions.

A2: Consolidate all recreation programs under management of the Montgomery County Department of Parks. This option proposes consolidating recreation programs under the authority of the Montgomery County Planning Board. The Department of Recreation would most likely be abolished, with its remaining functions that do not fit the definition of recreation programs shifted to another County Government department.

Option B: Maintain the two department structure, but assign program responsibilities between the two to eliminate overlap. Under this option, both departments would continue to offer recreation programs, but responsibilities across the five similar program categories (identified in the report) would be clearly divided between the two to eliminate overlap.

Option C: Maintain the two department structure, but consolidate recreation program registration and marketing under one department. Under this option, responsibility for the functions of program registration and marketing would be consolidated under one department. More study would be required to determine whether this merge should occur under the management of the Recreation or Parks Department.

Option D: Maintain the two department structure, but press for implementation of the provisions negotiated in the 2004 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). In July 2004, the departments entered into an MOU to improve service delivery and coordination. To date, the specific action steps outlined in the MOU have been only partially implemented. Under this option, the Council would encourage the Chief Administrative Officer and Planning Board Chair to place greater priority on implementing the MOU actions steps.

Office of Legislative Oversight's Recommendation for Council Action

Endorse consolidation of all recreation programs under one department (Option A1 or A2). Recognizing the multiple staffing and program details that must be worked out with such a change, OLO also recommends the Council assign and establish the deadline for the preparation of a Transition and Implementation Plan.

In sum, OLO's reasons for recommending the Council pursue a consolidation of all recreation programs under the management of a single department are:

- OLO did not find any distinct public benefits that result from the current dual agency structure;
- The track record of coordination efforts between the Department of Recreation and Department of Parks demonstrates only limited success;
- Consolidating the planning and management of recreation programs in one department should facilitate the delivery of a more streamlined and user-friendly system of recreation programs;
- The single management structure lends itself more easily to implementation of consistent pricing and cost recovery practices for recreation programs; and
- Consolidation offers the potential for cost savings from the elimination of duplicative administrative functions and redundant recreation program offerings.

The major drawbacks related to a consolidation of recreation programs in a single department are the costs and logistics associated with the transition from the current structure. While acknowledging that these costs and logistics pose legitimate issues that need to be addressed, OLO recommends against allowing these relatively short-term challenges to outweigh the potential longer-term benefits from consolidation.

Based on the information gathered during the study period, OLO concludes that a consolidation of recreation programs could be worked out in either direction. There is one set of advantages to consolidating all recreation programs under the management of the Department of Recreation; and a different set of advantages to consolidating all recreation programs under the management of the Department of Parks. The advantages of both options are briefly outlined below.

Option A1: Consolidate all recreation programs under management of the Montgomery County Department of Recreation.

Under this model, the County Government's Department of Recreation would be assigned responsibility for planning, managing, and delivering all recreation programs. The Department of Parks would continue to perform its mission to manage the Montgomery County park system, and carry-out its many other functions.

The major advantages of this model are:

- It places responsibility within the Department in County Government that already specializes in the management and delivery of recreation programs. Compared to the Department of Parks, the Department of Recreation currently offers the wider array of recreation programs and has more resources (including staff) dedicated to providing recreation programs.

- Continuing to locate recreation programs in a department that reports to the County Government's Chief Administrative Officer facilitates the coordination of recreation programs designed for target populations (e.g., seniors, teens, persons with disabilities) with related programs housed in other County Departments that share the same target audience.

Option A2: Consolidate all recreation programming under management of the Department of Parks.

Under this model, the County would consolidate all recreation programming under the authority of the Montgomery County Planning Board. This consolidation model would almost certainly result in the abolishment of the Department of Recreation, with its non-recreation program functions (e.g., the Gilchrist Center) moved to another County Government department.

The major advantages of this model are:

- It would align recreation programming, permitting, facility ownership, and facility operation functions into one agency.
- A single department providing both parks and recreation functions is the model most commonly used in other jurisdictions, and placing all recreation programs in Montgomery County under the management of M-NCPPC would parallel the structure already operating in Prince George's County.

Recommended Next Steps Towards Consolidation. After determining a direction for consolidation, OLO recommends the Council's next steps are to designate an entity responsible for the development of a Transition and Implementation Plan and establish a deadline for completion of such a plan.

OLO recommends the Council should assign responsibility for developing a Transition and Implementation Plan to the agency that would be assuming responsibility for management of all recreation programs, i.e., County Government or the Montgomery County Planning Board.

OLO recommends the Council ask that a Transition and Implementation Plan be completed no later than six months after the Council makes a decision on the direction of the consolidation. At minimum, OLO recommends that this plan address four issues:

1. **Timeline** – the plan should include a timeline for the major phases that would be required in the consolidation and the anticipated timeframe for completing each.
2. **Changes to State and/or County law** – the plan should identify whether any changes to State and/or County law are needed and take the necessary steps towards preparing the relevant legislative amendments.

- 3. Organization and programs** – the plan should address how the department and the program offerings will be organized after the consolidation, including the associated fiscal impact (over time) of what is proposed.
- 4. Staffing and personnel** – the plan should address the proposed staffing of the new organization and determine how existing personnel in the departments will be affected, both in the short- and longer-term.

Chapter IX. Agency Comments on Final Draft

The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) circulated a final draft of this report to the Chief Administrative Officer for Montgomery County and the Chair of the Montgomery County Planning Board. Copies were also shared with the Recreation Department and Parks Department staff who had worked with OLO throughout the study period. OLO's final report incorporates the technical comments and corrections provided by agency staff.

The written comments from the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and Director of the Department of Parks are included in their entirety, beginning on the next page. The comments from the Department of Parks indicate that the Montgomery County Planning Board plans to review the report and provide formal comments after the final report is released by the Council. Any comments received from the Planning Board will be made available as a report addendum before the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee worksession on the report.

OLO appreciates the time taken by agency representatives to review the draft report and provide written comments. While the comments from the Department of Parks raise questions and issues related to OLO's report, they also address matters that go beyond the scope of what the Council asked OLO to study. OLO agrees that most of the issues identified deserve discussion as the report proceeds through the Council's review process. In the weeks ahead, OLO stands prepared to follow-up on specific items as they are identified by the Council.



OFFICES OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Memorandum

Timothy L. Firestine
Chief Administrative Officer

January 8, 2009

TO: Craig Howard, Legislative Analyst, Office of Legislative Oversight
Rich Romer, Legislative Analyst, Office of Legislative Oversight

FROM: Timothy L. Firestine, Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: OLO draft "Organization of Recreation Programs Across the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation"

Thank you for your leadership and collaboration in preparing this excellent draft report. It is a tremendous resource for understanding the organization and operation of the Department of Recreation ("Recreation Department") and Department of Parks ("Parks Department"). I hope it will serve as a catalyst for beginning an in-depth analysis of steps that should be taken to optimize recreational programming in the County.

There is no question that recreation programs provided by both departments contribute significantly to the quality of life in the County and are greatly valued by our residents. A 2007 resident survey conducted by the National Research Center, Inc. found that 86% of County residents had visited a park in their community and 62% reported that they had used a County Recreation facility. In addition, over 80% of County residents reported that the number of recreational opportunities and quality of those opportunities were either "excellent" or "good". When asked what they liked most about County programs and services, County residents identified parks and recreational opportunities as the 2nd most popular category.

The OLO report indicates that most of the Parks Department's recreation programs are associated with its Enterprise Facilities (e.g., ice skating classes at the ice rinks, nature programs at the nature centers, etc.). For the most part, the Recreation Department does not provide the same types of classes, camps, and sports programs that are connected to those Enterprise Facilities.

However, we believe that the County could achieve a number of benefits by consolidating all recreation programs in one department, including:

- Consistent philosophy, mission, and priorities;
- Improved service for County residents (e.g., simplified "one-stop shopping" for camps, after-school activities, summer activities, sports, classes, and registration);

- Coordination of long-term planning for programs and facilities; and
- Enhanced volunteer and staff capabilities.

In light of these likely benefits, as well as the potential for achieving budget savings, we think the time is right for the County to fully explore and resolve all of the issues involved in consolidating programs in a single department.

We believe that this effort should include a Community Inventory of Recreation and Leisure Services. Many non-public entities provide recreational programs that compete directly with programs offered by the Parks and Recreation Departments. For example, there are hundreds of private camps offered throughout the County that impact registration for similar Parks and Recreation programs. A comprehensive community inventory that included a review of all of these types of programs would provide important context for decisions that must be made in order to consolidate all public recreation programs in one department.

We agree with OLO that there are many benefits to consolidating all recreation programs in the Recreation Department because this department already specializes in the management and delivery of recreation programs. Compared to the Parks Department, the Recreation Department currently offers a wider array of recreation programs and has more resources (including staff) dedicated to providing recreation programs. We expect that consolidation of programming in the Recreation Department could achieve efficiencies and savings typically associated with economies of scale. We also agree with OLO that placing all recreation programs in a department that reports to the County's Chief Administrative Officer would facilitate coordination of recreation programs designed for target populations (e.g., seniors, teens, persons with disabilities) with related programs administered by other County departments which serve the same target population.

The OLO report notes that one benefit of placing all recreation programs in the Parks Department is that this option would "align recreation programming, permitting, facility ownership, and facility operation functions into one agency". We believe that the final report should clarify that this benefit could also be achieved by merging the Parks Department into the Recreation Department. We also believe that the Council should fully explore this option in connection with its review of recreation programming.

The OLO report also notes that placing all recreation and parks programs under the management of the Parks Department would parallel the structure in Prince George's County. This statement is somewhat misleading. In Prince George's County, the County Executive appoints Planning Board members with the consent of the County Council. This gives the

Craig Howard
Rich Romer
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January 8, 2009

Executive more influence and control over the Parks Department than is true in Montgomery County. Viewed from this angle, consolidating recreation and parks programs in the Recreation Department would be consistent with the structure in Prince George's County. We look forward to participating fully in the Council's review of this report and analysis of all related issues.

cc: Gabe Albornoz, Director, Department of Recreation
Joe Beach, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Joe Adler, Director, Office of Human Resources
David Dise, Director, Department of General Services
Melanie Wenger, Director, Office of Intergovernmental Relations
Ginny Gong, Director, Community Use of Public Facilities
Jennifer Barrett, Director, Department of Finance
Kathleen Boucher, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer

TLF:rsd



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

January 8, 2009

Mr. Craig Howard
Office of Legislative Oversight
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Howard:

This letter is in response to the Office of Legislative Oversight Draft Report #2009-7, "Organization of Recreation Programs Across the Department of Parks and Department of Recreation" and provides comments from the Department of Parks (Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission) Montgomery County. A formal reply from the Montgomery County Planning Board and Park Commission (M-NCPPC) will be prepared and delivered after the final report is officially and publicly released.

In general, we are grateful for the conscientious effort by OLO staff to summarize and understand the recreation and related programming offered by both the Department of Parks and the County's Department of Recreation (MCRD.) We appreciate the effort the reviewers made to pull out relevant data from many sources to present an overview of what we both provide. It was clear from the outset that this would be a complex task, and we found the OLO staff to be patient, inquisitive, and ultimately fair. We also find that while the report lists program offerings and the status of the relationship between the two departments fairly well, it also shows various options for the future which would require more analysis than a simple comparison of program offerings might suggest.

We are pleased that, overall, the OLO staff finds that cooperation and a cordial working relationship is a hallmark of these two departments, and we truly appreciate highlighting those areas where we could do better between us. The review of the 2004 MOU was most helpful in understanding where we should place renewed effort if the status quo were to continue.

It remains clear to us, however, that parks and recreation should be merged -- the sooner the better. The conclusions and findings in this report further reinforce the overwhelming evidence for us that both departments should be placed within M-NCPPC for operational, financial, and legal reasons. To move in the other direction would be like having the sparrow swallow the eagle.

Below are our comments on: the recreational programming portion of the report; the conclusion and options for the future; and the legal concerns we believe are required for any analysis of those conclusions.

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING INFORMATION

1. **Data.** The charts, graphs, and narratives are quite informative up to a certain point. We note that the ratio of revenues to costs is roughly equivalent between the two agencies. A couple of caveats:

our revenues would be higher except for the fact that we give a price break for use of park facilities to our sister agency and biggest user, MCRD. This both lowers their costs and raises ours. Therefore, if corrected to reflect a true cost of doing business, the Department of Parks would appear to be more efficient. Second, we would have liked to see a comparison of the pay and benefits for an average MCRD employee in the report as well. The amount shown for M-NCPPC can be misleading because our work extends far afield from the lone provision of recreational programming and encompasses a broader range of responsibilities. Given the short time for the study, sticking to an overall surface look at what both agencies do in recreation alone is understandable, but it is not comprehensive without further analysis and drilling down into the numbers. Such analysis could assist us in deciding the best way to hire and deploy staff and make better use of seasonals and other forms of personnel management.

2. **Recreation and operations.** In the case of parks, recreational programming is treated as though it is separable from the operation of recreational facilities. It has proved to be nearly impossible, however, to sever operations and programming. Those who come to attend a programmed athletic event, for example, may also be users of the trails and picnic areas, and use the restrooms and other facilities. To have programming separated from the other forms of park operations is part of the reason we must constantly coordinate with MCRD, as called for in the MOU, and a major reason that, no matter how often we communicate, things arise on a daily basis that take more time to resolve than would be true under a unitary system of management. We appreciate that the OLO analysis recognizes this in its finding that a merger is desirable.
3. **Work years vs. positions.** We note a common problem in the display of our personnel costs, leading to a fallacy of implicitly thinking of "work years" as "positions." This is an understandable error, since we use a program budget and the authors have tried, in each of our program elements, to identify the work years associated with recreational programming. They seem to have sorted through our program budget well enough, but one work year may involve a portion of the work of several people. An example is the Brookside Gardens gardening programs and classes. The 2.6 career WYs are not necessarily 2 people working on the recreational programs full time, and another working 60% of the time. It could be many individuals amounting to 2.6 WYs. We often use professional staff who carry out educational functions as part of their broader jobs in parks. So, transferring the actual number of bodies to the Recreation Department could seriously impair the "non-recreational" activity at Brookside Gardens and other parts of the organization.
4. **Management costs.** This is another byproduct of our otherwise useful program budget. In this report, OLO included our program budget "management" costs as part of our recreation program expenditures. Do the MCRD numbers include a proportional percentage of their Administrative Division or Director's Office costs? If not, ours shouldn't either. (A particularly noticeable example is on page 38, Table 4-9; without the "management" costs, we'd have a small profit instead of showing a \$400K loss.) This is also an issue with what is identified as "overhead" which really includes all planning and management, not extras nor waste. Finding #11 states MCRD's operating budget for Programs and Facilities is \$23.9M in expenditures with an estimated \$11M in revenue. Again, does this include a proportional percentage of the administrative division and director's office costs? Does it include whatever payment (if any) is made to cover Park Police patrols? Are all associated costs included? If not, it cannot be compared to the Parks numbers in Finding #12, which include debt service and all associated costs from the program budget.

5. **Debt and capital costs.** As noted above, we are concerned that the budget numbers in the report do not allow an apples-to-apples comparison. Our expenditures include debt service; MCRD's do not. This leads the reader to presume that many of our programs are not profitable when, in fact, if we were treated like MCRD and not held responsible for our own debt service, many of these programs would actually show a profit. The numbers should be altered to allow a fair comparison. The Department of Parks provides facility planning, design, and construction management of its capital projects such as ice rinks and tennis centers with the Department's own resources, whereas the Department of Recreation relies upon the Department of General Services for capital development services.
6. **Quality of offerings.** There is some mention of user satisfaction surveys, but not of the results of those surveys. We can find no mention of participation levels, number of people served, or satisfaction levels. How can one possibly evaluate the success of programming without that information? The decisions on who offers what programming should be based on participation levels and customer satisfaction. Those decisions should be based on "who's doing it better?" not "who's doing it now?" They run the risk of eliminating successful, popular programs to make way for programs that aren't in demand.
7. **Multiple providers.** Our two agencies are not the only providers of recreational services in the County. And there really isn't that much programming overlap. In a county this size, there may well be enough demand to merit the multiple offerings in similar program areas. A proper report on county recreational programming would be assessing the overall recreation demands/needs of the county and reviewing all of the relevant program providers to determine appropriate levels of supply and demand and determine the right mix of county programs. So, just looking at the two of us limits understanding the full demand for these services. The ancient notion of consolidation of county recreational programming established in 1952 could not have foreseen a Montgomery County of 1 million citizens, with multiple providers (YMCA, private organizations, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.) for our youth, seniors, and others. We are well past that kind of thinking now. If anything, the competition between us (such as there is, and on a very limited basis) has been good for both of us as well as for our constituents. There is clearly enough demand for ever more recreational opportunities to keep us all busy. The Department of Parks got into increasing its programming in response to a clamor for more options from our citizens and users. It was done in response to demand. Therefore, the threshold question of this report--is there "duplication" of recreational services? --could be answered with a resounding "yes" and a further answer of "why not?"
8. **Enterprise.** The Enterprise portion of our recreational offerings deserves special mention. Essentially, we have two among several conflicting laws on the books--a 1952 ruling to consolidate recreation in its own department, yet a later law setting up the Enterprise fund for parks to provide certain recreational services and make money from them. We cannot have a true Enterprise Fund if we can't maximize the potential to raise additional revenue through programs. No private operator would be held to such restrictions and still be expected to have a profitable bottom line. Our creative new programming and camps sponsored by or located in Enterprise facilities (ice rinks, tennis, trains, etc.) is helping us to turn the corner in becoming more self-sustaining. We don't need more constraints here; we actually would like to expand these to meet our mandated performance goals.

9. **Miscellaneous provisions and corrections.**

- The report lists "School Break Programs" as a type of class/activity. This describes "when" programming is offered, not "what" type of program is offered. It should not be included in this list.
- **Page 4 lists Athletic Field Permitting and Maintenance** under the definition of OLO's seven categories of recreation programs. Technically, Athletic Field Permitting and Maintenance is not a recreation program, but is a means or a by-product of providing programs.
- **Page 33: Program Budget** – The program of "Administration of Parks" has only one sub-program. It is titled "Overhead" in the draft report. As the term "overhead" is not relevant to several of the of the program elements in this program, we have simply named the sub-program the same as the program; "Administration of Parks". We request you make this change.
- **Page 51 in the "program feedback and evaluation" section** states that "The Department of Recreation coordinates its program feedback and evaluation efforts through one staff member in the Director's Office..." We then should change our first sentence in that same section to read, "The Department of Parks coordinates its program feedback and evaluation efforts through one staff member in the Park Information and Customer Service Division..." The way it is currently written makes it appear that we have multiple staff dedicated to doing this when, similar to MCRD, it is only one person.
- **Page 52: "Facilities Operated by the Department of Recreation on M-NCPPC Property"** appears to have a couple of errors. Many of the facilities listed are not located on park property. Several are located on County-owned property. The table also excludes some Recreation Centers, including Damascus, Potomac, Scotland, Marilyn Praisner, and Germantown, which are all on County property. The only facilities known to be located on park property are:
 - Germantown Indoor Swim Center
 - Montgomery Aquatic Swim Center
 - Bethesda Outdoor Pool
 - Long Branch Outdoor Pool
 - Wheaton / Glenmont Outdoor Pool
 - Gwendolyn Coffield Recreation Center
 - Good Hope Recreation Center
 - Leland Recreation Center
 - Long Branch Recreation Center
 - Plum Gar Recreation Center
 - Wheaton Recreation Center
 - Olney Manor Skate ParkThe County has full responsibility for programming, operation, and maintenance of these facilities except for the Wheaton Recreation Center and the Olney Skate Park, which are maintained by M-NCPPC.
- **Page 56, in the bulleted list at the top**, add a bullet that reads "Regular release of unneeded fields prior to the start of each season to provide other county residents access and use of these amenities."
- **Page 57: Budgets** – It may be worth noting that M-NCPPC and the Montgomery County Recreation Advisory Boards jointly host a widely publicized "CIP Public Forum" in advance of every CIP in order to solicit public comment on park and recreation capital projects.

- **Page 61, in the "implementation in practice" section**, second paragraph, the report states a parks recommendation as "...for both departments to designate lead marketing contacts." This is incorrect; Parks already has a lead marketing contact. Our recommendation was for MCRD to establish one so we could more effectively coordinate our efforts.

CONCLUSIONS AND OPTIONS

Basically, it appears this "programming" study is really just an entryway into the merger discussion, and we welcome this conversation. Clearly, MCRD shares our view that this has been an unusual and occasionally awkward arrangement for both of us. The report itself leaves the analysis of its findings to decision makers, but does support a better model in Option A. It appears to say: decide how you want to fuse these organizations (or parts thereof) and then let someone else figure out what it will cost and how to do it. The "structural problems" that prevented a consolidation in the 1990's are not fully discussed nor amplified.

We understand one of the major structural problems is the historic and successful union of parks and planning in the same agency, developed with much institutional autonomy while retaining a high level of accountability. On the Prince Georges County side of M-NCPPC, parks includes the recreation function, and that alliance has worked extraordinarily well. In 1970, the Prince Georges County Recreation Department was merged into the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission by the General Assembly. All county benefits were grandfathered in with the merger. Since the merger, creative programs have been developed and award-winning facilities have been constructed, which has been instrumental in M-NCPPC winning the National Park and Recreation Association Gold Medal Award for Park and Recreation Excellence five times. No other agency in the country has come close to that record. M-NCPPC bested hundreds nationwide for this prestigious award, and was asked to take a five-year hiatus in 2004 so that others could compete. M-NCPPC is considered a leader in nationwide park and recreation circles, and others frequently ask to benchmark their programs against ours. It would be foolish to tear apart further one of Montgomery County's most cherished assets. We find that most other park and recreation agencies are astonished, however, that we on Montgomery County side have separate park and recreation departments.

Our analysis of the merger options:

Option A1. We do not think it is feasible to pursue Option A1—consolidate all recreation programs in MCRD—without seriously considering what this means to the efficient operation of a much larger and more diverse parks department which has recreation as just one of its functions. Transferring the entire department to the county would not be a good move, in our view, and would be contrary to the kind of "green balance" we provide between stewardship of our generous resources and recreational programming. The original genius of the founders who created the Park and Planning Commission has given us the great system of protection and opportunity we have today. Moreover, following Option A1 could likely result in the elimination of the Park Police, reducing park security. Policing parks is not something County/city police generally like to do. Most large public park systems have dedicated law enforcement patrols. Additionally, a consolidation under the county as proposed by Option A1 could sever programming of some recreational activities from the underlying resource and its management. Because the OLO report uses the term "recreation" to mean *permitted and scheduled* activities, it is fundamentally misses one huge aspect of recreation as it is generally defined – the *passive recreation and unprogrammed* activity in which most park users engage. The State survey of park and recreation needs previously supervised by our current Chairman, Dr. Royce Hanson, found hiking and walking in the parks to be the most common form of recreation. This takes nothing away from programmed sports

and other organized and scheduled activities. It suggests, however, that there is value in keeping all recreational activities and programs in a single organization. Trying, as Option A1 does, to distinguish the programmed from the unprogrammed will not result in clarity of mission. We cannot run a park system that does not organize some outdoor and indoor programs that help park users enjoy the resources of the system as a whole. Finally, the flexibility we have as a State-chartered agency allows us to pursue funding options to keep these programs going in tough times, in a way that is less available in an executive department of County government.

Option A2. Option A2 is clearly the most attractive to us. The Department of Parks already has some well-managed recreation offerings as just one component of larger land and facility management structure that also includes planning for facilities, construction of those facilities, acquisition of suitable sites and locations, and trails, maintenance, and security patrols. This choice to consolidate all recreation programming in the Department of Parks is quite feasible and makes good sense. With the excellent talent, offerings, and capabilities of the current Recreation Department, they could be much more easily absorbed into us than we into them. There will be some problems associated with assuming the retirement and compensation programs of MCRD, but those are surmountable. Our systems are no longer that different. It is a natural fit, as our counterparts in Prince George's County and throughout the country have shown. There will probably be some savings in personnel, but not much as recreational demand continues to climb. This kind of move would join programmed activity, facility management, and operations in an organization that knows how to manage very large operations and budgets, and has some independence to locate and tap alternate sources of funding. It produces a balance between active and passive recreation and recognizes their frequent overlapping roles. It does not require unscrambling the egg. It places the programmers of facilities in positions of shared responsibility for the quality of the facilities they program and in positions of greater influence with the parts of the department that build, operate, and maintain them. This approach also preserves the connection between parks and planning, which has been of such great benefit to the county.

Other choices. Simply moving the Department of Parks recreational programming function to MCRD makes no sense, given the uncertainty of the passive recreational programming component, the core parks nature study classes and similar programs, and the recreational requirements of the Enterprise Division – all cited above. Improving cooperation and fully implementing the current MOU is an excellent alternative if no structural changes are to be made.

LEGAL ISSUES

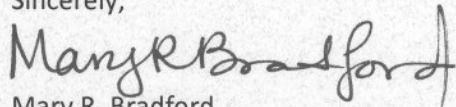
As noted by the OLO Report in its conclusion, we are seeking legal guidance on what must be done to analyze the options more fully and to move this discussion along.

In particular, the Department believes that OLO and the Council should consider an important legal question before taking any action on the recommendations contained in the report. Specifically, County policy historically has assumed that the Park Tax is "county taxes" for the purpose of Section 305 of the County Charter. According to the Commission's Office of General Counsel, that historical treatment is not necessarily legally correct, and our General Counsel has invited the County Attorney to consider and discuss this question further. As a practical matter, if our General Counsel's tentative view of this legal issue holds true, the fact is that the County Government would have far more flexibility to establish workable tax rates for the Commission than may otherwise be available for "real" County taxes. In other words, the County may have relatively more flexibility to achieve adequate funding levels for operations by consolidating all these operations under the Department of Parks.

We await further legal guidance on this matter and pledge to continue to make the best choices for the provision of recreational opportunities for our citizens in continued cooperation with the Department of Recreation.

On behalf of all of us in the Department of Parks, I must personally note what a pleasure it was to work with the OLO staff on this report. As they asked questions and explored our parks and offerings, it helped us more thoughtfully articulate our thinking for the future and gave us a clear-eyed look at how and what we were doing. We respectfully submit our comments with the greatest respect for the good work done in such a short time period, and look forward to further discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary R. Bradford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "M" and "B".

Mary R. Bradford
Director of Parks